



Sara Netanyahu's ex-hubby nixes bid

TEL AVIV — The first husband of Sara Netanyahu dropped plans to sue her for divorce, a friend said. The ex-husband, Dr. Neuberger, 37, of Kiryat Gat, has told him of his decision. Neuberger, who was married to Sara Netanyahu for three years, had filed for divorce in Israel's family court in Tel Aviv. Neuberger had been in the United States for several months, and his lawyer had been negotiating with Sara Netanyahu's lawyer. Neuberger had been in the United States for several months, and his lawyer had been negotiating with Sara Netanyahu's lawyer. Neuberger had been in the United States for several months, and his lawyer had been negotiating with Sara Netanyahu's lawyer.

Lardiness costs man \$5.8 million

AMMAN — A Lebanese man was wounded Sunday when a roadside bomb blew up in the Israeli-occupied border zone of southern Lebanon, Israel's army said. The motorist was injured when the bomb went off in the Jezzeine area of the buffer strip, a militia source said. No group claimed responsibility for the attack. Hizbollah, which spearheads anti-Israeli operations in the occupied zone, denied links with the incident.

Palestinians block Salloom road

SALLOUM (AFP) — Palestinian protesters blocked the highway between Libya and Egypt for five hours amid allegations that an Egyptian driver had struck and wounded one of them. Egyptian security officials said on Sunday. The incident occurred Saturday when Abdul Rahman Ibrahim Al Tohami refused to stop at a Libyan checkpoint on his way back from a business trip, fearing that customs officials would confiscate \$1,000 which were in his possession. Libyan customs officials alleged that Tohami struck and wounded a Libya border guard and a Palestinian from a nearby camp of 200 trapped in no-man's land between the two countries, the sources said. The Libyans urged the Palestinians to cut off the road in protest until the Egyptian authorities hand Tohami over, they said.

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Kabariti visits GHQ

AMMAN (Pera) — Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Abdul Karim Kabariti on Sunday called at the General Headquarters where he met with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai and discussed issues of concern to the Armed Forces.

Arafat to visit Syria

CAIRO (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat is expected to visit Syria before the signing of an accord with Israel on the West Bank town of Hebron, a senior Palestinian official said. Arafat will visit Damascus within a few days before signing an accord with the Israelis on Hebron, the official said. Arafat's visit to Damascus would be his second since the Cairo Arab summit in June where the Palestinian leader patched up a long-running feud with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad. The Palestinian leader asked to make the visit in a message he sent to Mr. Assad from Cairo last week as part of ongoing consultations between the two parties, the official said.

Bomb wounds civilian in South Lebanon

MARJAYOUN (AFP) — A Lebanese civilian was wounded Sunday when a roadside bomb blew up in the Israeli-occupied border zone of southern Lebanon, Israel's army said. The motorist was injured when the bomb went off in the Jezzeine area of the buffer strip, a militia source said. No group claimed responsibility for the attack. Hizbollah, which spearheads anti-Israeli operations in the occupied zone, denied links with the incident.

Israel to expel Burmese worker

HADERA (AFP) — Israel is to expel a Burmese worker who planned to attack Christian holy sites, police said Sunday. The building worker, named as Kan Liang Tang, 35, was arrested on Thursday in the central Israeli city of Hadera and the interior ministry has drawn up an expulsion order. The Burmese national, who arrived in Israel three months ago, was allegedly in contact with criminal elements in the Arab region of Unim Al Fahm. Police did not identify his targets.

Low turnout in Comoros plebiscite

MORONI (AFP) — Participation in a referendum on a new constitution for the Comoros Islands was weak as the polls closed, with many voters apparently convinced in advance that the issue would be carried. Polling booths closed at 6:00 p.m. (1500 GMT), but the definitive result is not expected until Monday. In the capital Moroni, electoral officers reported a low turnout. Polling stations elsewhere in the Indian Ocean archipelago had not provided any indication of voter participation. Just 12 days before the referendum, which is due to be followed by general elections on Nov. 24, the text of the constitution had been only thinly distributed, no electoral commission has been formed and the voting lists have not been revised. After calling for a boycott of the poll, the opposition, which accused the republic's president, Mohamed Taki Abdul Karim, of "authoritarian convictions," later called on its supporters to vote against the proposed constitutional changes. However, observers suggested that this change of tack came too late to mobilise voters. Some of the 300,000 electorate had not received their voting papers in time to cast their vote.

French-European role is necessary to balance peace process — Chirac

Israel rejects proposal outright

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — French President Jacques Chirac met his Syrian counterpart Hafez Al Assad for talks on the Middle East peace process Sunday as Israel ruled out a direct European role in the U.S.-brokered initiative.

A role for France and Europe in the Arab Israeli dialogue would "balance things," Mr. Chirac said, referring to the United States' status as Israel's key ally.

But he stressed at a joint press conference with Mr. Assad that he was "not contesting the U.S. role."

Ekeus, Iraqi officials in lengthy tug-of-war over weapons data

BAGHDAD (R) — United Nations arms envoy Rolf Ekeus and senior Iraqi officials are haggling again over small but significant issues which if resolved might eventually lead to a resumption of Iraq's oil exports.

Mr. Ekeus, the Swedish head of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) dealing with Iraq, arrived in Baghdad on Saturday and the official Iraqi News Agency (INA) said he met Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz later in the day.

Others including Foreign Minister Mohammed Al Sahaf, Oil Minister Amer Rasheed, who formerly headed Iraq's Military Industrialisation Commission, and presidential adviser General Saadi Tu'ma Abbas were present. INA said.



French President Jacques Chirac (left) makes a toast with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad before a dinner at the Syrian presidential palace in Damascus on Saturday (Reuters photo)

PUK puts up stiff resistance to KDP assault on Sulaimaniyeh

SALAHUDDIN (Agencies) — Iraqi-backed Kurdish guerrillas met fierce resistance on Sunday as they tried to smash through the defences around their rivals' stronghold of Sulaimaniyeh.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) predicted it would capture Sulaimaniyeh in 48 hours, but a Western humanitarian said the KDP faced "tough resistance" in the key town of Dukan from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

KDP guerrillas led by Massoud Barzani were "pounding Dukan with Howitzers while the PUK men are fighting back with mortar fire," said the worker who asked not to be named.

Arafat laments Rabin's death

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Sunday paid tribute to former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, assassinated a year ago by a right-wing Jewish extremist.

"Shalom Haver (hello friend), I miss you," said Mr. Arafat, using the words of U.S. President Bill Clinton at Rabin's funeral, in an interview for Israeli Public Radio in Gaza City. "I miss you," Mr. Arafat added in English.

AOHR alleges human rights violations in Jordan

Group decries 'curbs' on freedom of expression

By Lamia Tabbaa and Maria Bizri
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Arab Organisation for Human Rights (AOHR) accused the government on Sunday of registering the worst record of human rights since the democratisation process began in 1989, calling on the authorities to "return to the jurisdiction of the law" and to rescind all measures that the AOHR said violate these rights.

Ex-detainees claim torture

AMMAN — Four Jordanians who were arrested after the Karak riots in mid-August claimed on Sunday that they were tortured while in detention at the General Intelligence Department (GID) and the Swaga prisons.

Senior GID official rejects allegation, points out victims have legal recourse

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AMMAN — A senior official at the General Intelligence Department (GID) on Sunday denied all allegations of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners levelled by the Arab Organisation for Human Rights (AOHR). The official said the courts were open for anyone who wishes to seek legal recourse on such grounds.

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UAE to mount raids in crackdown on illegals

ABU DHABI (AFP) — United Arab Emirates (UAE) authorities will mount a nation-wide search for illegal migrants after an amnesty allowing them to leave ends late this month, newspapers reported on Sunday.

Interior Minister Mohamed Said Al Badi met his aides on Saturday and discussed carrying out raids on suspected concentrations of illegal migrants and other foreigners who are violating immigration laws, the papers said.

More than 150,000 Indians and other Asian illegal migrants have left the UAE since the amnesty was set to expire on September 30 but was extended to allow all violators to leave and avoid facing several years in prison under a tougher immigration law.

"There will be no new extension of the amnesty," said Ali Rashid Al-Nuaimi, director of public relations and moral guidance at the interior ministry.

"We will launch comprehensive search drives after the end of the deadline. They will be conducted in coordination with the ministries of labour and social affairs, justice and immigration departments and police throughout the

UAE."

Security sources said the raids would cover the large industrial city of Musaffah, where thousands of illegal migrants, mostly from India and Bangladesh, had been based before the amnesty was announced.

Other targets include low-cost restaurants and cafes, housing complexes, companies and other public places. Police will also be authorised to stop and check suspects in streets and other public places.

Coast guards said they would step up naval patrols in territorial waters and deploy more radar networks to guard against infiltrations.

Officials reported this year that the coast and border guard would also be equipped with additional patrol boats and advanced monitoring systems.

"The aim of the search campaigns is to organise the presence of foreigners in the country so it will conform to the new immigration law," Mr. Nuaimi said.

"They will be conducted within the principle of respect for human rights and the new law will be enforced on all without exception."

Mr. Nuaimi said the drive would also target employers who either recruit illegal migrants or foreigners who are sponsored by another employer.

Under the new immigra-

tion law, which went into effect on Oct. 1, foreigners who sneak into the UAE illegally face a three-year jail sentence and a 30,000 dirham (\$8,174) fine. Those who bring them in face a stiffer punishment, including up to 15 years in prison and a fine of \$27,247.

Police records show nearly 25,000 foreigners, mostly Asians, have been seized while trying to enter the UAE illegally in the past 25 years in search of jobs. But another 100,000 have managed to get in by sea after crossing the Gulf from Iran under cover of night.

Nearly half of those who have left the UAE under the amnesty were from Bangladesh and India while the rest were from the Philippines, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The seven nationalities account for more than half the UAE's total population of around 2.3 million.

Security officials say illegal migrants have been attracted to the UAE's proximity to their home countries, its poorly-guarded long coastline, lax laws, the presence of large Asian communities and massive wealth.

A poor desert oasis before oil was struck three decades ago, the UAE now has one of the highest per capita incomes in the world, estimated at around \$16,500 in 1995.

Israeli army demands budget increase citing 'threat of war'

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — The Israeli army is demanding an increase in the country's defence budget to face up to an increased threat of war with Syria and the possibility of a new wave of Palestinian violence, a newspaper said here Sunday.

The army wants \$300 million more than the proposed defence budget for 1997, while the right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has proposed cuts of \$258 million on 1996 spending levels, said the mass circulation Yediot Aharonot.

"We have to prepare ourselves for every eventuality and we have no right to take risks," army Chief-of-Staff General Amnon Shahak told parliament's defence and foreign affairs committee last week, according to the paper.

"We said that there would be no war as long as the windows of opportunity remained open, but now we must change our assessment," Yediot Aharonot quoted an intelligence official as saying.

Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and Gen. Shahak

plan to ask the government for an extra budget to raise the army's preparedness for war, the paper said.

During last week's meeting of the Knesset foreign affairs and defence committee, an increase in the billions of dollars was discussed.

"Due to the present situation, we can not take chances as we could before," the newspaper quoted Gen. Shahak as telling the committee.

Yediot also quoted U.S. intelligence estimates that there was a 30 per cent chance of a Israeli-Syrian flare-up. The estimates said there was a low probability of an all-out conflict, but a high probability of escalation in South Lebanon, where Israel maintains a force, and a "distinct possibility" of limited fighting in the Golan Heights.

Israel Radio said Israel was worried about the continued deployment of Syrian troops in the Bekaa Valley in South Lebanon. Asked about the chance of war with Syria, Foreign Minister David Levy stressed Israel's aspiration for "quiet on all fronts."

"Israel's hand is stretched out to peace," Mr. Levy said.

"With this, our army is on alert and carefully monitoring every movement and organising accordingly ... the other side will have to think many times what is the best way for it and the region."

Israeli-Syrian peace talks stalled after a series of suicide bombings against Israel by militants in February and March. Syria demands the Golan Heights be returned in exchange for a peace accord. Prime Minister Netanyahu, who was elected in May, says Israel should retain control of the strategic plateau.

A total of 15 Israeli soldiers were killed in violent clashes with Palestinian police and civilians last month in the worst Israeli-Palestinian violence for 30 years.

Military chiefs also pointed to the risk of military conflict with Syria to demand a budget increase, said Yediot.

Tension between Israel and Syria has been heightened since Mr. Netanyahu took office in June, and Israeli military officials have been concerned by a series of Syrian troop movements in recent months in Lebanon and near the Golan Heights.



Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on Sunday holds talks with Talab Sana (left), an Arab Israeli member of the Israeli Knesset, in a meeting attended by Minister of State Mifleh Ruheimi (Petra photo)

Israeli Knesset member pays tribute to Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputy leader of the Arab Democratic Party in Israel and member of the Arab group at the Knesset Talab Al Sana on Sunday expressed appreciation of His Majesty King Hussein for his continued support for the Palestinians and described King Hussein's visit to Jericho last week as historic.

Speaking at a press conference after a meeting with Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, Mr. Sana said Mr. Kabariti requested him to convey an invitation to the leader of Shas movement to visit Jordan.

Mr. Sana voiced his party's appreciation and that of the Arab members of Knesset and Arab Israelis of Jordan for its continued support for the Palestinian people.

He said his talks with Mr. Kabariti focused on the importance of inter-Arab cooperation and coordination between Arab-Israelis and Arab states. Such coordination will help "abort

attempts by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government to derail the Middle East peace process and impose its fait accompli policy in the West Bank and Gaza, he said.

Mr. Sana said Arab Israelis had initiated contacts with Arab states to help push the peace process forward.

He said recent events had proved that the "security" theory which Mr. Netanyahu has introduced during his election campaign was futile and useless.

"Israel is living in political isolation as a result of the extremist policies adopted by the Likud government, which refuses to adhere to the peace accords," he said.

The Arab group at the Knesset has formed a nine-member parliamentary block to support the Palestinian people in their efforts to establish an independent state on their land with Jerusalem as its capital.

The formation of the group, which is known as "the Parliamentary Association for East Jerusalem, the Capital of Palestine", has drawn angry reactions among the Israeli rightist groups, Mr. Sana said.

Mr. Sana said there was no possibility of early elections for the Knesset. However, he did not rule out the break up of the current coalition government and the participation of the Labour Party as an equal partner in the government.

He said he rejected an Israeli decision to appoint an Israeli minister for Arab affairs, and warned that the Arab Israelis would boycott this minister and will not deal with him.

He said Arabs were the original inhabitants of Palestine and therefore should not be treated as aliens.

The Knesset member said his party will make a suggestion to the Knesset requesting it to withhold confidence in the present Israeli government.

Doha ends row over missing funds

DOHA (R) — Qatar on Sunday announced settlement of a dispute with its deposed emir over billions of dollars missing from its treasury.

A Justice Ministry statement quoted by the official Qatari News Agency said Doha was dropping all lawsuits against Sheikh Khalifa Ben Hamad Al Thani in return for settling accounts at the centre of their dispute.

The statement did not say how much was involved but unofficial estimates of the sum controlled by the former emir since he was toppled by his eldest son in a bloodless palace coup last year have ranged from \$3 billion to \$7 billion.

Authorities in France and Switzerland blocked several bank accounts controlled

by the former emir earlier this year at the request of the new government in Doha.

The Qatari Justice Ministry statement said the agreement to drop all lawsuits inside and outside the country against Sheikh Khalifa and Isa Ghanem Al Kawai was in return for settling the accounts that were at the centre of the dispute.

Mr. Kawai was a former minister of information who held the influential post of head of the emiri diwan or royal court and was director of the former emir's office.

The Al Thani family reconciliation, which the ministry said was settled on Friday, promises to end more than a year of political uncertainty in the small,

sparsely-populated country state which has grown rich on oil and possesses the world's largest reserves of natural gas after those of Russia and Iran.

Sheikh Khalifa, who came to power in 1972 by ousting his uncle, was overthrown while he was on holiday in Geneva.

He remained in exile in Europe until December when he returned to the Gulf, established a headquarters in a luxury hotel in Abu Dhabi and toured Arab states seeking support for his claim as Qatar's legitimate ruler.

Sheikh Khalifa was accused by Doha of financing an anti-government plot in February, a charge he denied.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Eastern Sudanese appeal for help with food shortage

KHARTOUM (AP) — The provincial legislature of the Red Sea state in eastern Sudan has urged the Sudanese government to help overcome food shortages faced by thousands of citizens, a newspaper reported Sunday. The independent, pro-government daily Alwan said the legislature approved a report describing a deteriorating food situation and "cases of malnutrition among children, women and the elderly." The paper put the number of impoverished people in the Red Sea area at 71,000 families. The Association of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies recently said 240,000 families were threatened by food shortages in the area. It was unclear why the figures differed. Alwan said repeated droughts have driven farmers into the main town of Port Sudan for work, cutting back food production. It said further strains were caused by migration from southern Sudan because of the country's 13-year civil war. More than 1.3 million people have been killed in the fighting and resulting droughts. The southerners, mainly Christians and animists, are fighting for more autonomy from the Muslim-dominated government in Khartoum.

9 dead in armed raid on Turkish house

ISTANBUL (R) — Unknown assailants raked a house with gunfire in Istanbul on Sunday, killing nine people including children, the state-run Anatolian news agency said. It said the gunmen raided the house in the city's Esenler district at 4 a.m. (0100 GMT) and shot dead nine members of a family from Turkey's mainly-Kurdish southeast. The attackers then fled, Anatolian said in a brief report.

Pharaonic secrets found on tablets

CAIRO (AFP) — Archaeologists have found 12 stone tablets that contain new secrets concerning the construction of pharaonic temples, the government Al Akhbar daily reported Sunday. The tablets, known as "foundation tablets," were found during work to dismantle columns at the court of Amenhotep III in Luxor, southern Egypt, for restoration, the secretary general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, Ali Hassan, told the paper. The tablets found at the foot of the columns bear Hieroglyphic texts, which according to initial studies, describe the construction of pharaonic temples, their dates and the names of the architects. "Further studies will reveal new secrets on the construction of the pharaonic temples," Mr. Hassan said.

10 jailed for arson attacks in Bahrain

MANAMA (AFP) — Ten Bahrainis have been condemned to between six months and three years in prison for arson attacks and vandalism during anti-government unrest, newspapers said Sunday. The State Security Court sentenced four people to three years in prison for torching a tailor's shop and attacking a worker there, the Gulf Daily News said. One other person was jailed for two years in the same case. One Bahraini was sentenced to two years for setting fire to a private car, while another was sentenced for six months and fined 420 dinars (\$1,116) for "damaging public property," the English-language paper said. Three Bahrainis were sentenced to six months in jail and fined 200 dinars (\$531) for setting fire to a car that belonged to a rental company. At least 25 people have been killed since anti-government unrest erupted in December.

Algerian film wins Afro-Arab prize

TUNIS (AFP) — A film by Algerian director Merzak Allouache won the top prize Saturday at the Biennial Carthage Festival of Arab and African cinema. "Salut cousin" (hello cousin), which describes the dilemma of Algerians fleeing the civil war in their own country but unable to integrate in France, was awarded the Golden Tanit, worth \$8,000. Mr. Allouache, who won the Silver Tanit for "Bab Al Oued city" in 1994, also took the special prize of the organisation of African unity. "These rewards will enable us to make some copies," he quipped, before adding more seriously, "it also means that Algeria still exists." The Silver Tanit went to "Po di Sangui" (tree of blood) by Flora Gomes of Guinea-Bissau, an account of birth, death, religion and nature in a village where each child grows up with a tree which is considered his soul. The Bronze Tanit was won by Palestinian Rashid Mashbarawi for "Haifa," set in a Palestinian refugee camp in the wake of the 1993 peace accords with Israel. Nineteen feature films and 17 shorts from a total of 14 countries were entered for competition in the week-long festival, which was first held 30 years ago. A total of 200 films from all over the world were shown during the week.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:05MuppetShow
14:30 The Bold and the Beautiful
15:00Varieties — L'Integrale
15:30Doc. — Travelling Gourment
16:00Nature's Inventions
16:30Hey Dad
17:00News Flash
17:01Destiny Ridge
18:00 Magazine — Dassiopfe
19:00Le Journal
19:15Magazine — Cinq Sur Cinq
19:30News Headlines
19:35Rosanne
20:01Documentary
20:30Cinema, Cinema
21:10The Lazarus Man
22:00News in English
22:30Return to Love Dove
23:15Bodies of Evidence
23:59Dad's Army

PRAYER TIMES

04:22Fajr
05:39(Sunrise) Duha
11:20Dhuhr
14:32Asr
17:02Maghreb
18:19Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.

632785.

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Amman, Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.

Terra Santa Church Tel. 622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel.

771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.

775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

Amman International Church

Tel. 827126

Evangelical Lutheran Church

Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical

Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel.

654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel.

675691.

The Evangelical Local Church

in Amman Tel. 811295

Dr. Khalid Abdo657126

Latin Catholics Parish Tel.

614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the

Department of Meteorology.

Relative warm weather condi-

tions will prevail with tempera-

tures higher than average by

3-4 degrees centigrade and

winds southeasterly moderate.

In Aqaba, winds will be

northerly moderate and seas

calm.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Min./Max. temp.13/30

Amman636140

Aqaba21/36

Deserts12/32

Jordan Valley19/36

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 30, Aqaba 35 Humid-

idity readings: Amman 19 per

cent, Aqaba 30 per cent.

USEFUL

TELEPHONE

NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Bassam Karadshah

.....759200

Dr. Ramzi Mazzawi894788

Dr. Salman Daboubi776751

Dr. Khalid Abdo657126

Ferdows pharmacy778336

Al Asena pharmacy637055

Naironkh pharmacy632672

Al Salam pharmacy636730

Yacoub pharmacy644945

Shmeisani pharmacy637660

Naironkh pharmacy847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qann281484

Al Quds pharmacy(—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Samir Al Lawzi989601

Khalidi Maternity644281/6

Akileh Maternity642441/2

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111

Civil Defence Department661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue

630341

Civil Defence Emergency199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade617101

Blood Bank775121

Highway Police843402

Traffic Police896390

Public Security Dept.630321

Hotel Complaints605800

Price Complaints661176

Water & Sewerage Complaints897467

Amman Municipality Complaints

.....787111

Telephone Information (directory

assistance)121

Overseas Calls010230

Central Amman Telephone

Repairs623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs661101

Jordan Television773111

Radio Jordan774111

Water Authority680100

J. Electricity Authority815615

Electric Power Co.636381

RJ Flight Information08-53200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITAL

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre813813/2

Khalidi Maternity644281/6

Akileh Maternity642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity642362

Maihas, J. Amman636140

Palestine, Shmeisani607071

Shmeisani Hospital669131

Civil Defence Hospital845845

Al-Muasher Hospital667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen777101/3

Al-Bashir775111/26

Army, Marka891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital602240/50



Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti meets with board members of the Jordanian Cooperative Organisation and lauds their efforts in boosting the agricultural sector (Petra photo)

Prime minister pledges support for cooperative activity

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Sunday pledged government support for the Jordanian Cooperative Organisation (JCO) in stimulating cooperative movements throughout the Kingdom.

Speaking during a visit to the organisation where he met with board members in the presence of Minister of State Mifleh Ruheimi and the corporation Director General Khaled Tayeb, Mr. Kabariti lauded the organisation's efforts towards boosting production in the agricultural sector among others.

He stressed the need for restructuring the JCO's financial and administrative system within the framework of an overall development programme.

The JCO has been facing financial problems due to few farmers paying back loans.

Mr. Ruheimi outlined various services offered by the JCO to the farmers as well as efforts in encouraging investments from cooperative societies. He also presented a report about JCO efforts to collect dues from cooperative societies and farmers.

Also on Sunday the prime minister visited the Ministry of Industry and Trade where he met with Minister Ali Abul Ragheb and Minister of Supply Munir Sobar to review matters related to preparations for next month's Middle East Economic Summit in Cairo.

Discussion also covered a Jordanian industrial fair to be held in Ramallah on the West Bank on Nov. 6. Jordanian exports to Iraq, the Kingdom's current negotiations for joining the World Trade Organisation and the Jordanian Industrial Estates Corporation's current plans to open industrial cities in

various governorates. The prime minister later visited the Ministry of Justice and met Minister Abdul Karim Dughmi to discuss problems facing national tribunals.

He said that the ministry ought to increase the number of court justices in order to shorten waiting periods between trials.

Earlier Sunday Mr. Kabariti instructed Minister of Finance Marwan Awad to allocate JD 100,000 from the 1997 Department of Palestinian Affairs' fiscal budget to help finance youth club activities in Palestinian refugee camps.

The prime minister's decision was made following recommendations from Minister of Youth Mohammad Daoudieh.

Mr. Daoudieh said that 13 clubs in these camps will benefit from the grant.

Austrian delegation to meet with Parliament members

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An Austrian parliamentary delegation will pay an official visit to Jordan from Oct. 23 to 25, according to an Austrian embassy statement.

The commission, headed by Heinz Fischer, comes upon an official invitation by Speaker of the Lower House Sa'd Hayel Srour.

During their three-day visit the delegation is scheduled to meet with both the Speakers of the House and Senate as well as with several senators and deputies.

The two groups will exchange views on parliamentary experiences in both countries as well as discussions of possibilities for closer cooperation.

According to the Austrian embassy, the official programme has not been yet finalised as the visit of the delegation coincides with the forthcoming visit of French President Jacques Chirac on Oct. 24.

The commission is scheduled to arrive on Wednesday afternoon. They will start their visit with a trip to Jerash and are expected to meet with Parliament members on Oct. 24, the statement said.

Journalists make tentative agreement towards allowances

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Press Association (JPA) Sunday reached a tentative agreement with the government regarding the increase of salary allowances for JPA journalists employed by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The debated increase would move the previous 60 per cent allowance up to 90 per cent.

Minister of Administrative Development Kamal Nasser and JPA President Seif Al Sharif signed a memorandum of understanding to this effect during a visit by the minister to JPA offices where he met with the association's board members.

Mr. Sharif told the Jordan

Times Friday that he had submitted a request to raise the Petra journalists' allowances to Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and was awaiting the government's reply.

He maintained that JPA members are the only members of Jordanian professional associations who receive less than a 90 per cent allowance for their labours.

The memorandum underlines government responsibility in reconsidering journalists' allowances, Mr. Sharif said, adding that the minister promised to submit the memorandum to the Council of Ministers shortly as well as his ministry's direct involvement in any

discussions pertaining to amending the government-unified allowance system.

The total amount of allowance currently paid by the government to the 95 Petra journalists amounts to an annual JD 772,000 and the additional requested amount would amount to approximately JD 36,000, according to Mr. Sharif.

During the meeting Sunday, Dr. Nasser expanded upon ministry efforts in reforming the public administration system and training civil servants to achieve that goal.

"Jordan is entering critical circumstances which require every sector to join its forces and dialogue with

others in a quest to safeguard national interests," said the minister.

Affirming that Jordan was, indeed, entering a new phase of socio-economic development Dr. Nasser said the Ministry of Administrative Development was in the process of amending the Civil Service Commission, which recruits people to work in public administration offices.

The minister said that every journalist is called on to reflect a bright image of their country so that they can contribute positively to the tourism industry and in the national effort towards progress and prosperity.

Rural migration patterns discussed in CARDNE seminar

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan's rural regions are facing complex socio-economic problems exemplified by human migrations from rural to urban regions, Minister of Agriculture Mustafa Sheikar said Sunday.

Addressing the opening session of an 11-day training seminar regarding the designing of investment projects for rural regions, the minister said that as this migration continues rural and agricultural regions suffer as those with experience in cultivating the land leave behind uninhabited and under-utilised lands.

This human migration rose sharply in this past decade to reach a total of 73

per cent of the total rural population, up from 37 per cent in the 1950s, said the minister who cited economic, social and political developments in the entire region as contributing factors for this phenomenon.

Dr. Sheikar added that the Kingdom's rural regions face the additional challenge of mounting environmental problems which require immediate solutions. "We recognise the need to solve these problems and the Ministry of Agriculture has been drafting plans for the development of rural regions," the minister stressed.

He affirmed Jordanian hopes that affiliation with

the World Trade Organisation and partnership with the European Union in coming years will help solve agricultural issues but he said that Jordan still must develop human resources as a preparatory stage.

Organised by the Centre for Agricultural Reform and Development in the Near East (CARDNE), delegates to the meeting hail from Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Tunisia, Pakistan and Iran.

CARDNE Director Amal Sabbagh addressed the session outlining the centre's aims and stressing that these efforts are designed to aid national authorities responsible for the development of rural regions.

Such development, she said, includes the incorporation of the rural population in the overall development of the country as well as a specialised attention to small farmers and the indigenous in rural areas.

Ms. Sabbagh stated that CARDNE is intensifying efforts in personnel training with the purpose of expanding its projects and helping all regional member countries.

She said that this seminar aims particularly to orient instructors and trainers on methods of designing projects deemed necessary for the general development of rural regions.

Increase in olive harvest expected — official

By Christina Schlegel
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — This year's olive harvest is supposed to boast an increase of 46.1 per cent, from last year's 65,000 tonnes to 95,000 tonnes this season, but the figure is still below original estimates, said Director of Agriculture Economics and Policy Department Fawzi Annari.

The olive harvest is slated to begin Nov. 1 and will last for two months, including olive oil production, Dr. Annari told the Jordan Times Sunday.

The Ministry of Agriculture is recommending that farmers not start picking the fruits before they are ripe. Some producers, he said, tend to harvest too early in order to obtain higher profits as fresh olives are scarce this time of year.

"This year's olive output," Dr. Annari explained, "is expected to be very good or even excellent. But because of the summer drought — olive trees require moderate temperatures and humidity — the estimated olive production will be 95,000 tonnes instead of [the expected] 110,000 had climate conditions been perfect."

According to Dr. Annari, the crop's output depends on two factors: the fertility rate (age) of the olive trees itself and the weather. A total of 81,600 tonnes of olives will be used for olive oil production, while the remaining 13,400 will be pickled.

Olive tree plantations amount to a total of 865,000 dunums in the Kingdom and grow in two areas called "fruitful" consisting of 627,000 dunums

and "non-fruitful" covering 239,000 dunums. Dr. Annari explained.

Non-fruitful zones, Dr. Annari said, is the expression used for trees which are not at a fruit-bearing age.

This year's extraction percentage is therefore estimated at 20 per cent, which adds up to an olive oil production of about 16,000 tonnes (81,600 x 20 per cent).

"With an output like this, we will more or less meet the estimated annual consumer need of 16,000 tonnes," Dr. Annari stated.

Despite this he acknowledged that an extraction percentage of 20 per cent is not very high. In very good years, that is rainy years, it could be around 22 to 25 per cent, he said.

He explained that in case

of an olive oil supply shortage, the Ministry of Agriculture will look into the possibility of importing the remainder from the West Bank. Jordan's main source of auxiliary supply for many years.

Alternatively, the deficiency can be made up through Ministry of Supply purchases usually tax free from Tunisia and Spain, Dr. Annari said.

In recent years people from the West Bank and Gaza Strip have sent olives, olive oil and pickles as a gifts to their relatives in the Kingdom and thus compensated eventual shortages to a certain extent, he said.

Dr. Annari could not yet provide estimates on this year's price for olive oil nor the amount of money farmers will be paid for their harvests.

Four new attorneys assigned in 'Bay' at al Imam' trial

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordan Bar Association Sunday assigned, for the third time, four defence attorneys for 13 people, some accused of sabotage, after the seven original attorneys appointed by the association withdrew from the case, State Security Presiding Judge Youssef Faouri said.

The newly appointed lawyers are Ghassan Kayed, Fouad Ibrahim, Mohammad Shawabkeh and Ayman Kayed.

"To ensure justice and as some of the defendants, if convicted, could receive the death penalty, the court decided to accept the assignment of the new attorneys by the association," Judge Faouri said.

On Oct. 7, the seven previously appointed attorneys withdrew from the case, in its final stages, in protest of the State Security Court's decision to defer its verdict as well as its re-depositing of two witnesses, including one from the prosecution.

The attorneys told the court that they decided to withdraw as "we feel that we cannot (adequately) defend our clients upon the court's new decision."

The attorneys charged that the court was accommodating prosecution mistakes, instead of maintaining neutrality.

During the one-hour court session explosive expert Captain Jaffar Jamil Abdul Rahim of the Central Intelligence Department (CID) told the court that he destroyed two hand-grenades given to him by the military prosecutor shortly after the defendants' apprehension.

On Oct. 7, the court questioned the prosecution as to the whereabouts of these hand-grenades which the prosecution had mentioned in its charge sheet but never introduced in court.

The explosive expert told the court that he had gotten rid of the hand-grenades as there was rust on their fuses and "they could have exploded at any time."

The previous defence team had strongly protested calling Capt. Abdul Rahim to testify in court, arguing that the prosecution was at fault in its evidence presentation.

The defendants claim that they were framed by security forces. Seven of the 13, known by their affiliation name Bay'at al Imam (pledge of allegiance to the leader), are charged with illegal possession

and manufacturing of explosives materials — a charge that could carry the death sentence — and slander against His Majesty King Hussein.

The remaining six are charged with distributing pamphlets slanderous to the King.

The court also called on a new explosive expert, Captain Hashem Khayleh of the Public Security Department (PSD) to testify on the effect of mixing three substances (oxygen water, acetone and lemon salt) to confirm or deny that these substances can form explosive materials.

The prosecution has charged that these substances were found at the third defendant's home.

The court had previously decided to summon Capt. Ali Ensour, a prosecution witness to testify in this matter. The decision was also protested by the first group of attorneys.

But on Sunday's session, Judge Faouri said the court would not call Capt. Ensour and decided instead to call on the new witness "to ensure justice."

The military court tribunal set Oct. 26 to hear the explosive expert's testimony.

Italian violin and guitar duo to perform baroque concert at Mount Nebo

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Under the patronage of TRH Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid and Princess Majda Ra'd and invited by the Italian Embassy in Amman in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the celebrated violin and guitar duo, Massimo de Bonifis and Giuseppe Petrella are coming to Jordan to the delight of all music lovers.

Among all the known formulas in chamber and baroque music, the violin and guitar association is one of the most pleasant and the most harmonious, possibly equalled only by the violin and flute. The intimacy and soft dynamics of the guitar blend perfectly with the bright vibrations of the violin.

The biography of Massimo de Bonifis and Giuseppe Petrella would impress even the most blasé music aficionado or concert-goer.



Massimo de Bonifis

Beyond literature, however, listening to the duo in performance constitutes the most convincing experience. The video tape and music cassette given for review to the Jordan Times reveal mature musicians in perfect control of their instrument and their art, playing with authentic expression.

Two concerts are scheduled, one private, in Amman, and the second, on Wednesday Oct. 23, in the unique atmosphere of Mount Nebo. There will be a different programme for each performance but both will include works by Gioacchino Rossini, Ferdinando Carulli, Francesco Molino, Mauro Giuliani, Antonio Diabelli and violin virtuoso Niccolò Paganini. All these composers were born in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Giuseppe Petrella on guitar and Massimo de Bonifis on violin and viola — a magnificent example of the finest Italian music.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

*"Mon Oncle d'Amerique" at the French Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

LECTURES

*Slide lecture: "Lawrence of Jordan: in the Footsteps of T.E. Lawrence (of Arabia) in Jordan" by Dr. Jack Lee at the Friends of Archaeology Centre at 6:30 p.m. (Tel. 696682).

*"Why Do Poets Re-tell Old Stories?" by Dr. Nicholas Linfield at the British Council at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

*Exhibition of children's books at Haya Centre, until Oct. 29.

*Exhibition entitled "Jerusalem Domes, Doors and Windows" comprising photos by Julia Reinhold and paintings by Riham Ghassib at the InterContinental Hotel, until Oct. 31.

*Works by Ghassan Abu Leban at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Oct. 23.

*Works by Ghada Dahdaleh at the French Cultural Centre, until Oct. 29.

Employment Opportunities

Group of Companies Based in Amman is Seeking to hire:

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- 2- Minimum of 7 Years experience.
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- 6- Broad Experience in Several accounting areas.

B) Office Manager / Executive Secretary.

- 1- University Graduate.
- 2- Fluent in spoken and written English.
- 3- Full Knowledge of administration policies and practices.
- 4- Excellent Computer Skills.

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Republicans maintain attack on Democratic Party funding

WASHINGTON (R) — Republicans Saturday continued their all-out attack on President Bill Clinton and his Democratic Party for accepting what Republicans have called improper donations from foreign interests.

The Democratic National Committee (DNC) has stripped the fund-raising duties of its vice-president for finance, John Huang, and called in the Federal Election Commission (FEC) to investigate.

A senior Democratic Party official Saturday said the FEC was asked to review the fund-raising activities of Huang, a former official with Indonesian conglomerate Lippo Group, who was soliciting money from Asian Americans for the DNC.

Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich told CNN television the flap was "far, far bigger than Watergate," adding, "this is the largest scandal to affect the presidency in the history of the United States."

Republican National Committee Chairman Haley Barbour said the contributions pointed toward a larger pattern of accepting donations from foreign interests.

"This is the first time there has been a pattern of practice of huge contributions

from outside of the United States being actively solicited, funnelled into the U.S. with the participation of the administration," Mr. Barbour told CNN's Evans and Novak programme.

Mr. Clinton has remained silent, saying only that he asked the DNC to review all donations to ensure they were appropriate.

But his campaign Saturday fired back at Republican Bob Dole, citing a guilty plea by Mr. Dole's finance vice chairman Simon Firemen on charges of illegally reimbursing his employees for contributions to the Dole campaign.

White House spokesman Mike McCurry told CNN's "Capital Gang" the whole controversy had been one-sided thus far and ignored large contributions by a British-owned tobacco company and a Japanese-owned car company to the Republicans.

Mr. Clinton campaign manager Peter Knight said the Republican National Committee had accepted \$2.4 million in contributions from the U.S. subsidiaries of foreign-owned companies.

"What this is going to wind up being is one large argument for campaign finance reform," Mr.

McCurry said, noting Sen. Dole had blocked Democratic efforts to reform campaign finance laws six times in Congress.

Mr. Huang's fund-raising activities have been sharply criticised for links to soliciting money from businessmen with ties to Indonesia, South Korea and other foreign countries.

The Democratic Party official said Mr. Huang would concentrate on sorting out the sources of the funds in question. He said the committee had asked the Election Commission to investigate the issue on a "fast track" basis so it could be resolved and made public before the Nov. 5 presidential election.

A committee spokeswoman, Amy Weiss Tobe, said Mr. Huang "has no current fund-raising assignments" but remained on the committee's staff. She said Mr. Huang would fully cooperate with the committee and the FEC in their investigations.

Last month, the committee returned a \$250,000 contribution handled by Mr. Huang after determining it came from a South Korean company, Cheong Am, not its U.S. subsidiary.

Republicans were also calling on the party to return \$425,000 in contributions

from an Indonesian couple, Arief and Soraya Wiradinata, with ties to Lippo Group, as well as \$140,000 raised at a Buddhist temple in California.

Mr. Huang also set up the temple fundraiser.

The DNC Friday said it would reimburse the temple \$15,000 for the use of its facilities.

The Capitol Hill newspaper Roll Call Thursday said a review of federal election data showed that over two dozen members of Congress, mainly Democrats, received donations from individuals associated with the Lippo Group from 1988 to 1996.

Meanwhile, President Clinton widened his lead over Sen. Dole to 11 points, with Mr. Dole's support falling away after a bounce from Wednesday's debate, an ABC News poll showed Saturday.

The latest ABC poll, using a two-day Thursday-Friday average, showed Mr. Clinton's backing rose by two points, to 52 per cent, while Mr. Dole's rose by one, to 41.

"The small bounce Bob Dole got following his tougher words this week (in the presidential debate) about Bill Clinton has not continued," the tracking poll said.

It said Mr. Clinton had averaged 52 per cent since Labour Day, Sen. Dole's 41 points was 2 per cent above his post-Labour Day average.

Reform Party candidate Ross Perot continued to trail the presidential field with 5 per cent of the vote.

The poll canvassed 1,351 people, including 1,020 registered voters and 703 likely voters. The margin of error was 3.5 per cent for registered voters and 4.5 per cent for likely voters.

A Newsweek poll of 755 registered voters showed that if elections were held today 54 per cent would vote for Mr. Clinton, 28 per cent for Mr. Dole and seven per cent for Mr. Perot.

The daily Reuters tracking poll Saturday showed Mr. Clinton ahead of Mr. Dole 44.6 to 36.8 per cent with 5.1 per cent support for Mr. Perot.

U.K. poll: Conservatives erode Labour lead

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's ruling Conservative Party has dramatically eroded the commanding lead of the Labour opposition, cutting it from 23 percentage points to 14 in two weeks, an opinion poll published Sunday showed.

The NOP poll in the Sunday Times said Labour's standing was the poorest for three years, though the party of Tony Blair would still win an election handsomely.

The poll credited Labour with 47 per cent of voting intentions, down five points on the last NOP poll two weeks ago, while support for the Conservatives rose four points to 33 per cent.

The centrist Liberal Democrats also saw their support rise by one point to 14 per cent.

Tory strategists attributed their party's improvement to a "return to the fold" amid good economic results and the recent annual party congress which managed to paper over the cracks on membership of the European Union.

They expressed quiet optimism for the general elections which must be held by May next year.

A year ago Labour had a 30-point advance on the Conservatives.

Mr. Blair is still by far the most popular leader, with 39 per cent of respondents seeing him as strong, understanding the concerns of ordinary people and with good ideas to make the country a better place to live in.



Hundreds of demonstrators stage a protest march in Hong Kong displaying a huge portrait of detained Chinese dissident Wang Dan Sunday. Protesters are demanding that Beijing release Chinese dissidents including Mr. Wang who is expected to be charged with plotting to overthrow the government (Reuters photo)

Hong Kong activists demand freedom for Chinese dissident

HONG KONG (AFP) — Several hundred pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong held a protest demonstration Sunday, demanding freedom for top Chinese dissident Wang Dan, currently facing subversion charges.

The activists of the Hong Kong alliance in support of patriotic movements in China marched from near the British-ruled territory's legislature to the office of Xinhua news agency, China's de-facto mission here.

"We are enraged at the intended prosecution of Wang Dan on the subversion charge and so would like to express our anger and concern," alliance spokesman Lee Cheuk-Yan said.

He said 800 people took part in the march.

They pasted a letter demanding the release of Mr. Wang, Wei Jingsheng and other Chinese dissidents at the door of Xinhua, whose

officials rarely receive petitions in person.

Earlier Sunday, a senior Hong Kong politician whose views lean towards Beijing challenged the Chinese government to come up with proof that Mr. Wang was guilty of subversion.

Allen Lee, chairman of the Liberal Party, a pro-business party critical of the democracy reforms of Governor Chris Patten, said China's recent actions against prominent dissidents had had a negative impact on public opinion in Hong Kong.

"The escape of Wang Xizhe and the arrests of Wang Dan and Liu Xiaobo certainly influence Hong Kong people's thinking," Mr. Lee told the government-run radio station RTHK.

"Were these dissidents only critical of the Chinese leaders or did they collaborate ... with a view to overthrowing the Chinese government? Are their activities subversive?"

He added: "Mr. Deng Xiaoping said that the Communist Party is not fearful of criticism. Therefore I call on the Chinese government to provide evidence of subversion."

Charges, including acts of subversion and "counter-revolution," were filed against Wang Dan, a student leader in the 1989 pro-democracy movement, on Oct. 7. His trial is believed to be imminent.

Wang Xizhe fled China through Hong Kong on October 12, and then flew to the United States.

He was co-author, with Liu Xiaobo, of a letter that attacked President Jiang Zemin and called for self-determination for Tibet.

Mr. Liu was sentenced to a three-year term in a labour camp earlier this month.

Albanians vote under world scrutiny

TIRANA (R) — Albanians started voting Sunday in local government ballots seen by the West as a fresh test of the Balkan nation's commitment to democracy five months after a controversial general election.

President Sali Berisha's ruling Democratic Party and the opposition Socialists both campaigned hard to persuade the 2.2 million voters that their policies offered the best prospects for Albania's towns and communities.

Polls close at 9:00 p.m. (1900 GMT). Candidates from 26 parties were fighting for influence in 64 town councils, 36 district councils and 310 communities.

But only the Socialists, reformed heirs to the Communists, could really expect to challenge the conservative Democrats' grip on power, strengthened by a disputed general election in May and June.

"The Democratic Party — a certain victory," ran the headline in the government's Rilindja Demokratike newspaper.

"The people's free vote will overcome manipulation and violence," said their rival publication, the

Socialist Party daily Zeri i Popullit.

Most opposition parties, including the Socialists, withdrew from the general elections alleging ballot-rigging and intimidation — charges upheld by some international observers.

President Berisha, a heart-surgeon turned politician, declared the local polls would "definitely be free and fair" as he cast his vote near his Tirana apartment.

"I would like to invite all Albanian electors to devote one hour from their precious time to Albania," said Mr. Berisha, who later walked to his office under a cloudy sky.

The United States and the European Union have sent a clear signal to Mr. Berisha's conservative government that they will watch the local polls closely for signs that Albania is conforming to democratic norms.

The Central Elections Commission said it had authorised 303 international observers to monitor Sunday's vote.

The Council of Europe, which is responsible for monitoring coordination, praised the level of techni-

cal cooperation and said it hoped the elections would run smoothly.

But over the weekend the Democrats and the Socialists accused one another of attempting to obstruct a fair vote.

The Socialists alleged the government had tried to exclude its officials from preparations for the ballot. Conservative press claimed the socialists were intent on boycotting proceedings.

"The immunity of everyone's vote is more important than the victory of this or that party, the right or the left," wrote Albania's biggest daily Koha Jone in an appeal for calm.

Final results were not expected before the middle of the week, but the U.S. republican institute will hold an exit poll in cooperation with Albania's Pikpamja Shejptare Foundation.

The toughest fight is expected in Tirana where all parties have put forward heavyweight candidates for the post of mayor, held by the Democrats for the past

Japanese empress celebrates 62nd birthday

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's Empress Michiko celebrated her 62nd birthday Sunday saying she hoped the royal family could give the country "relief and joy." Empress Michiko said the past year had seen difficult times including an outbreak of the O-157 colon bacillus which left 11 people dead and more than 9,000 people ill during the summer. "For the past year, there were many concerns which threatened the safety of people's life," Empress Michiko, the wife of Emperor Akihito, said in a statement. "I hope the royal family can provide people with relief and joy," she said. Empress Michiko refused to comment on the future of her 27-year-old daughter, Nori, who is the only unmarried child in the family. "I wish the future of Nori to be full of happiness," she said.

Kennedy Space Centre opens doors to fans

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (R) — The Kennedy Space Centre threw open its doors to the public Saturday for the first open house in its 30-year history. Between 30,000 and 40,000 visitors were able to drive along the same road taken by astronauts on launch days right up to the space shuttle Columbia, sitting on launch pad 39B. "I can't believe how old it looks," said Dahlia Marks of Orlando, Florida. If I was getting on a Delta jet that looked like I'm not sure I'd want to. Columbia made its first flight in 1981 and is the oldest shuttle in the fleet. The wear and tear from its numerous lift-offs and re-entries was obvious to visitors but is not usually seen in television pictures. Visitors could drive their cars on the shuttle landing strip and wander about in the mammoth Vehicle Assembly Building (VAB). The VAB, built in the 1960s to house the Saturn 5 moon rockets, is one of the largest buildings in the world.

Prince Philip has skin tumour operation

LONDON (AFP) — Prince Philip, 75, husband of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II, had an operation last week to remove a small skin tumour on the face, the Sunday Times reported. Quoting a source close to the royal family, the paper said analysis of the tissue removed from under the right eye had revealed nothing malignant. The prince appeared in public Thursday with a bandage on the side of his nose, giving rise to speculation that he had hurt himself in his favourite pastime of carriage driving. "Basically, they scraped away some skin to be on the safe side," the source said, adding that the prince was in good spirits and had left London Saturday as planned to preside at the Berlin conference of the World Wildlife Fund for Nature Sunday.

Boar which broke into Polish police HQ killed

WARSAW (R) — Police tracked down and shot a wild boar which broke into their regional headquarters in the southeastern Polish city of Lublin, private Radio Zet reported. The boar smashed the glass of one locked door to the building Thursday night, got in through an open door and left after knocking over furniture in a waiting room. "In the morning, police launched a search and found the animal in a field across the road, where it had bitten a dog, which terrified owner with children had been herself in her house," the radio's Lublin branch said. Police killed the boar with a shotgun.



Republican presidential nominee Bob Dole shakes hands with supporters on the rope line at a rally in Norfolk, Virginia, at the end of a day of presidential campaigning in Kentucky and Virginia Saturday (Reuters photo)

Kashmir ruler asks separatist leader to migrate to Pakistan

JAMMU, India (AFP) — The new chief minister of Kashmir Sunday asked a prominent Muslim separatist to migrate to Pakistan if he disputed the Himalayan state's accession to India.

Farooq Abdullah told reporters here that separatist leader Abdul Gani Lone would have to reconcile to the fact that Kashmir has been an integral part of India since 1947.

"If Lone has any problem with my being an India, he should, if he desires, cross over to Pakistan," Mr. Abdullah said. "Other (separatist) leaders could follow suit."

Mr. Abdullah, a Muslim whose National Conference party last month swept the elections for the Kashmir Assembly, denied Mr. Lone's charge that the chief minister was an "Indian agent."

"We went to the people and they voted us to power," he said.

"The (separatist) leaders went door to door urging the people to boycott the polls, but the voters refused to listen to them. The secessionists in Kashmir have lost the battle politically."

Mr. Abdullah said, however, that he was open to talks with Muslim separatist leaders.

"My government's doors for talks will always remain open," he said. "If they want to accept my offer, they are welcome. If they don't want ... and are bent upon toying a pro-Pakistan line, they are free to go to Pakistan."

India accuses Pakistan of

arming and training Muslim militants fighting for Kashmir's secession.

Islamabad denies the charge, but gives diplomatic backing to the unrest, calling it a legitimate struggle for self-determination.

Meanwhile, four Muslim militants and two policemen were killed in a fierce gunbattle Sunday in Kashmir, and a police officer said fighting was still raging.

The firefight erupted when police and paramilitary forces stormed a militant hideout at Pohru, 10 kilometres from Srinagar, the summer capital of Kashmir.

A police officer said the militants rejected appeals to surrender and opened fire. "That prompted our boys to return the fire ... The fighting is still continuing."

No further details were immediately available.

More than 15,000 people have died in a bloody Muslim separatist campaign in Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, since 1989.

In a separate development, the families of three of four Western hostages kidnapped by Muslim separatists in Kashmir 15 months ago arrived here Sunday to make fresh appeals for their freedom.

Nine family members of Britons Paul Wells and Keith Mangan and American Donald Hutchings flew in from New Delhi, but were prevented by the police from meeting reporters at the airport.

A police officer said the

families would stay in the Kashmir Valley for some days during which they would meet Muslim leaders and government officials in the troubled Himalayan state.

The nine family members included the wives of Wells, Mangan and Hutchings. Wells' father and Mangan's parents. They were accompanied by a British diplomat based in the Indian capital.

"The families have moved to a hotel," the officer said. "They may meet the press" on Monday.

A shadowy Muslim group known as Al Faran seized six Western tourists in Kashmir's hill district of Pahalgal between July 4 and 8. American John Childs escaped while Norwegian Hans-Christian Ostro was beheaded by the captors.

Since then the group has rejected numerous appeals from within and outside Kashmir to free Wells, Mangan, Hutchings and German Dirk Hasert. The abductors had earlier sought the release of 15 jailed colleagues in exchange.

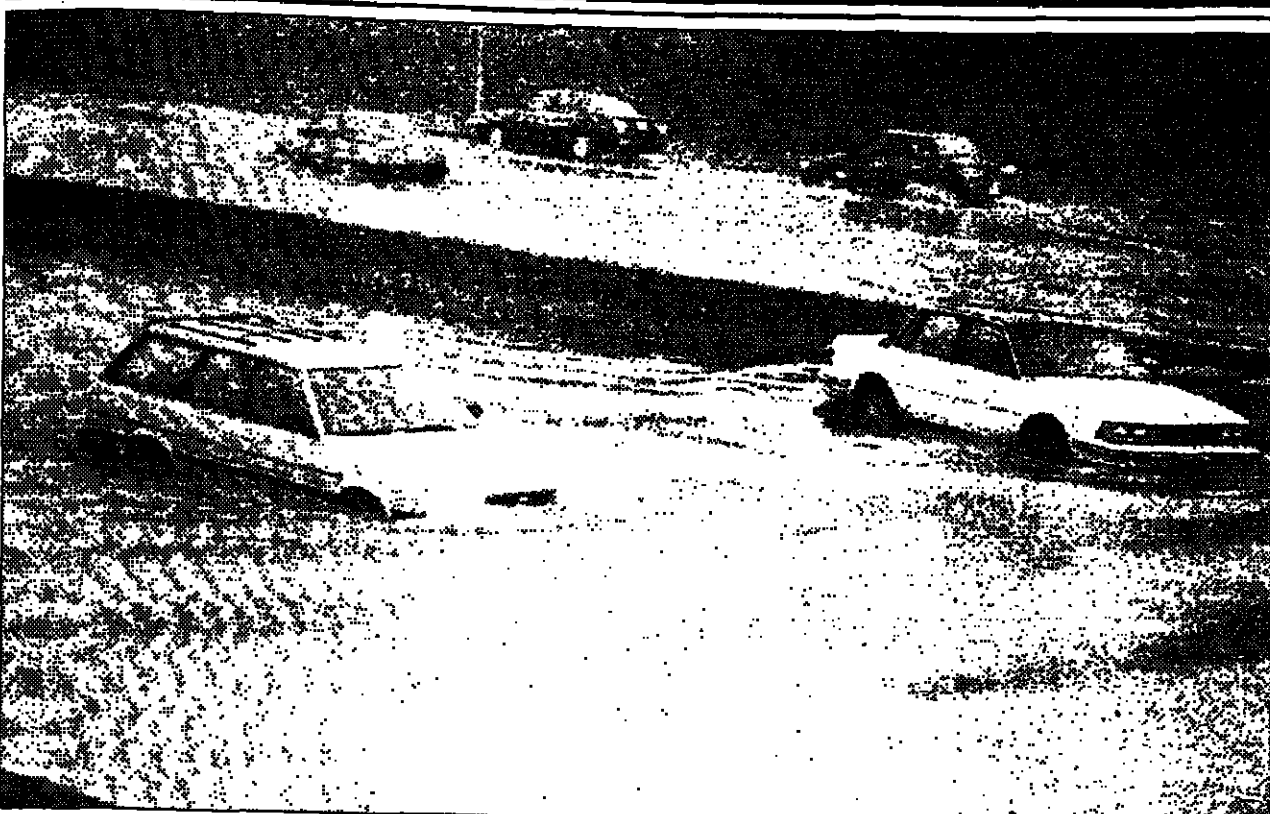
The arrival of the families came a day after Mr. Abdullah said the hostages were alive.

"The latest information I have about the hostages is that they are all alive," Mr. Abdullah said here. "I have got the area of (their) location also. But I will not disclose it now as it can cause problems."

"I pray to Allah ... they reach their homes safely," he added.

Japanese emper
celebrates 62nd
birthday

TOKYO (AP) — Japanese Emperor Akihito celebrated his 62nd birthday Sunday, saying he was "rejoicing" in the country's "rebirth" after the difficult times of the 1990s. The emperor said the past year had been "difficult" because of the outbreak of the colic bacillus which killed people and more than 100,000 people died in the summer. "For the past year, there were many people who were threatened by the colic bacillus," Emperor Akihito said. "I hope that the people can provide relief and joy." Emperor Akihito said he was "rejoicing" in the country's "rebirth" after the difficult times of the 1990s.



A driver tries to pass through a flooded road in New York Saturday. A heavy storm dumped more than eight inches (20cm) of rain in portions of the New York City-New Jersey metropolitan area, causing at least one death and leaving more than 100,000 homes without electricity. The same storm caused the first game of the World Series with the New York Yankees and Atlanta Braves to be called off (Reuter photo)

1 dead, hundreds evacuated after storm hits New York

NEW YORK (R) — A heavy storm dumped more than eight inches (20 cm) of rain in portions of the New York City-New Jersey metropolitan area, causing at least one death and leaving more than 100,000 homes without electricity, officials said Sunday.

A 12-year-old boy in Babylon, Long Island, died when a tree uprooted by the storm fell on him, and about 400 people were evacuated as a precaution against flooding, officials said.

Thousands more area residents were also preparing to evacuate coastal areas, where flooding is expected by early Sunday.

"The storm actually developed on top of us. It came from nowhere. It ac-

tually formed right on top of New York City," said Joe Goudswaard, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

He said the storm system was "cut off" from the prevailing wind flow so there was nothing to push it out of the city. "It just sat there, drifting very, very slowly to the north," he said. "That's why the city got dumped on so heavily."

The heaviest rain began pushing into Connecticut around midnight (0400 GMT), he said.

The rain left a record 4.22 inches (10.7 cm) in Central Park. Laguardia Airport got just over four inches (10.1 cm) of rain and Gillette, New Jersey, got 8.63 inches (21.9 cm) in one day, the

National Weather Service said.

The vicious storm brought dangerous flooding, washed out roads, closed major bridges and ripped trees from their roots.

Nearly 400 people in the area were spending the night at 20 evacuation centres, with more arrivals expected as road closures and high tides start to arrive, said Heather Ringwalt, a spokeswoman for the Red Cross. "We expect the worst about 3 a.m. (0700 GMT) when the tide is expected to rise," she said.

The torrential rains were a nightmare for motorists as cars, stalled because of the high waters, made it difficult to travel across the city. During the day, visibility on

some roads was reduced to zero.

Contributing to the grim traffic problem was the closure for at least several hours Saturday of sections of the Long Island Expressway, the Garden State Parkway in New Jersey and other major roads because of heavy flooding.

Laguardia Airport remained closed until noon Sunday as a result of a Delta Air Lines jet skidding off the runway just short of Flushing Bay Saturday afternoon.

Newark Airport had no departure delays because of the storm but reported up to one hour arrival delays. John F. Kennedy International Airport had no extensive delays.

Japan exit polls forecast LDP misses majority

TOKYO (R) — Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) appeared set to fail Sunday in its bid to win a clear majority in Japan's general election, television exit polls said.

But political analysts said even if it failed to win an outright victory, the LDP was likely to continue to rule by sharing power in another coalition government.

Japan's authoritative NHK public television said the LDP was heading for a tally of around 240 seats, with a minimum of 251 required for a clear majority. But it said there was a chance that the LDP might scrape home with a majority. NHK polled 410,000 voters in its exit polls.

"We were aiming to get at least 235 seats, and the exit polls surely point in that direction," said LDP campaign manager Katsuhiko Shirakawa.

In another exit poll of 300,000 voters, Nippon Television (NTV) said Mr. Hashimoto's party would fall well short of an outright majority, with only around 237 seats.

Figures also showed that turnout would likely be a record low, a sign of what political analysts say is increasing disillusion among the voters with all the parties.

In the outgoing parliament, the conservative LDP held 211 seats in a 511-seat lower house and governed in a coalition with the Social Democrats and Sakigake, an LDP splinter group.

Mr. Hashimoto took over as prime minister last January and called the elec-



A young woman, holding a dog, casts her ballot for the general elections at a Tokyo polling station Sunday. Japanese voters were slow to go to the polls Sunday in general elections which Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto hoped would end coalition rule and return his Liberal Democratic Party to sole power (Reuter photo)

tion four weeks ago.

The main opposition grouping Shinshinto (New Frontier Party), which held 160 seats in the outgoing parliament, was forecast to either maintain its strength or lose a few seats, with the other seats split among other liberal parties.

The polls said the fledgling Democratic Party, formed only last month with 52 lower house defectors from the Social Democrats and Sakigake, was expected to maintain its numbers.

The only clear winner appeared to be the Japan Communist Party, which exit polls said could increase its seats to 25 from 15.

Sunday's vote for a 500-seat lower house in a revised electoral system was the first general election since 1993, when the pro-business LDP lost its 38-year unbroken grip on power, ushering in a period

of coalition rule.

Election officials said voters stayed away from the polls in record numbers, with the turnout about 60 per cent, nearly seven percentage points worse than 1993's record low.

"I'm worried about the voting turnout. We did the best we could," Mr. Hashimoto had told reporters in his first public appearance on election day.

Political leaders had described the election as a "landmark" and "turning point" because the four-year term for the lower house means the new government is likely to lead Japan into the 21st century.

The election was held nearly one year ahead of schedule because of Mr. Hashimoto's belief that he could win sole power for the LDP amid an improving economy and success in cooling down opposition to the presence of U.S. troops in Okinawa.

A record 1,503 candidates from nine parties contested the poll. The new system, in which multi-seat constituencies were abolished, was intended to foster debate on larger policy issues and root out efforts by candidates to appeal to voters with promises of lavish spending on local projects.

Voters elected 300 single-seat candidates, while 200 seats were decided by proportional representation.

In the main policy difference, Shinshinto opposed an LDP plan to raise the sales tax to five per cent from three per cent next April and said it would freeze the sales tax and cut income tax.

500 dissident Khmer Rouge troops parade in show of unity

SISOPHON, Cambodia (R) — About 500 Khmer Rouge dissidents paraded in Cambodian military uniform Sunday, but the show of martial unity was marred by differences over control of the breakaway troops.

Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) generals told Reuters Sunday that a total of over 3,000 soldiers from Khmer Rouge divisions 518 and 519 who were joining government forces.

The 500 attending the ceremony about 350 kms northwest of Phnom Penh represented the 3,000 loyal to Ieng Sary, a Khmer Rouge leader who broke with hardliners in August.

About 1,500 family members would also join the government side, the generals said.

But Prum Su, Khmer Rouge commander of 518 and 519 divisions, said the change of uniform and the

parade did not mean his forces were integrating into the government forces.

"It's not an integration ceremony," he said. "It's a ceremony to recognise our movement," he added.

He said integration of his troops into the armed forces could be expected soon but it had not happened yet.

RCAF General Tum Sombot said, "they changed their uniforms. Starting from today ... They are RCAF."

The ceremony included a banquet and parade. The breakaway rebels, some as young as 15 years old, seemed overwhelmed as beer and food was served to them at provincial government offices to the music of a live band playing pop music.

One 30-year-old soldier told Reuters he had joined the dissident formation because he tired of fight-

ing.

Talks are underway between the government and representatives of Ieng Sary's faction to try and broker a deal on national reconciliation.

Mr. Ieng Sary, who in August led thousands to defect from hardliners loyal to Pol Pot, has been negotiating with the government since September when King Norodom Sihanouk granted him an amnesty from a 1979 death sentence.

Mr. Ieng Sary was sentenced to death in absentia for his role in the genocide carried out by Cambodia's Khmer Rouge rulers between 1975 and 1979.

He was one of Pol Pot's lieutenants and foreign minister during Khmer Rouge rule when more than one million Cambodians were executed or died from starvation in rural labour camps.

Bangladesh ex-president Ershad gets bail again

DHAKA (R) — Bangladesh's jailed former President Hossain Mohammad Ershad has been granted bail in five cases of corruption and misuse of power, but has a long way to go before winning his freedom, his lawyers said Sunday.

They said the retired army general obtained his latest bail in a lower court Saturday, his fifth since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took power in June.

Gen. Ershad's Jatiya Party supported Ms. Hasina's Awami League to form the government after the last election, and vowed to work together for strengthening democracy.

A lower court Saturday gave Gen. Ershad bail on charges that he had illegally allotted a state-owned house to his Jatiya Party, his lawyers said.

The lawyers said Gen. Ershad, who seized power in a bloodless coup in 1982 and was deposed in an 1990, faced 17 more corruption charges.

All the charges against Gen. Ershad were filed by the government of former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

Gen. Ershad had been in the Dhaka Central Jail since the middle of 1991 but was granted parole to attend parliament after he was elected a member of parliament in the June general election.

For the last two months Gen. Ershad has been living in a sub-jail set up near the parliament house, and fighting for bail in all the cases.

Khaleda's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) alleged Saturday that Ms. Hasina's government had reached an unwritten deal with Jatiya for setting Gen. Ershad free in return for his party's support.

Awami sources dismissed the charge, saying the law will take its own course.

Gen. Ershad was sentenced to 23 years of imprisonment in four cases for keeping illegal firearms and corruption.

Sri Lanka mounts anti-Tiger offensive

COLOMBO (AP) — Security forces bombed a key Tamil Tiger base in northern Sri Lanka as rebels elsewhere torched a wildlife bungalow and tried to sabotage a telephone exchange, officials said Sunday.

The air force bombed the "Sea Tiger" bases of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the coastal Chundikkulam Bird Sanctuary region over the weekend, officials said.

There said damage to the guerrillas' facilities was believed to be high but no details were immediately known.

The long-range attacks came as police shot dead a Tamil Tiger guerrilla who was about to bomb a key telephone exchange in north-eastern Sri Lanka, local officials said.

Sentries opened fire when two members of the LTTE approached the new 200-line telephone exchange at

Kinniya in the Trincomalee district Saturday.

"One Tiger was killed and his body was recovered by the police together with explosives he was carrying to blow up the exchange," said an official in Trincomalee, 257 kilometres north-east of here.

Two days earlier, a policeman was killed while defending another telephone exchange in the same district, officials said adding that the Tigers had stepped up attacks against basic infrastructure in the region.

The defence ministry said a total of three rebels and a soldier were killed in three other clashes in the island's north-east Saturday.

In south-eastern Sri Lanka, a search was underway for Tamil guerrillas who torched a bungalow inside a wildlife sanctuary and escaped with six vehicles, police and local officials said.

Six men stormed the Patanagala bungalow in the Yala Wildlife Park Saturday and carried out the arson attack, officials said adding the 22 local holidaymakers staying there were unharmed.

"Six vehicles have been taken away by the attackers," the region's chief police officer, Deputy Inspector-General Nalin Delgoda said by telephone.

One holidaymaker at the Patanagala bungalow, Desmond Ludawyk, said the guerrillas ordered them from the bungalow before setting it ablaze.

The terrified wildlife enthusiasts, some in their night clothes, rushed to a local police station to raise the alarm, police officials said by telephone from Tissamaharama, 14 kilometres from the Yala Sanctuary.

The victims and police said they believed the raid was carried out by the LTTE

which is known to have infiltrated the region. The gunmen, dressed in camouflage clothes, carried grenades and automatic rifles.

There have been similar attacks against two other bungalows in the park in recent months as security forces stepped up attacks against the LTTE in the neighbouring eastern regions.

The latest attack came as Energy Minister Anuraudda Ratwatte was visiting Tissamaharama.

Gen. Ratwatte, who is also the junior minister for defence and is responsible for the military drive against the LTTE, has said that troops were preparing for a jungle war with the Tigers.

Security forces have also said they were bracing for a protracted jungle war with the Tigers who are fighting to establish an independent homeland called Eelam in the island's north-east.

Chechen separatists ready to work with new envoy

MOSCOW (R) — Chechen separatist leaders have welcomed assurances by Russia's new envoy to the region that he backs the peace deal signed by ousted Security Chief Alexander Lebed. ITAR-TASS news agency said Sunday.

Akhmed Zakayev, security aide to the separatist leadership told TASS the statements by Ivan Rybkin had made the Chechen separatists optimistic and had been greeted positively in the republic.

Mr. Rybkin, appointed Saturday to replace Gen. Lebed as secretary of President Boris Yeltsin's Security Council and his envoy to Chechnya, indicated that he would contin-

ue Gen. Lebed's efforts to bring peace to the region, torn by 21 months of fighting.

"I am a convinced supporter of peace agreements in Chechnya and will do everything to get out of the crisis," Mr. Rybkin told RIA news agency.

Gen. Lebed's deal, signed with separatist leaders in August, has come under fire in Moscow for giving too much away to the separatists, who are consolidating their power over the breakaway region as Russian troops withdraw under the deal.

"We are ready for cooperation and close working contacts with Ivan Rybkin and any Russian official

sincerely interested in the re-establishment of stable peace in the region," TASS quoted Mr. Zakayev as saying.

Former rebel Chief of Staff Aslan Maskhadov, appointed prime minister by the separatists Saturday, was more cautious.

"We will judge (Rybkin) by his actions," he told TASS.

Gen. Lebed, ousted Thursday for making waves in the Kremlin, said his departure jeopardised the shaky peace in Chechnya. He added that Mr. Rybkin would be unable to secure a permanent end to the conflict, which has cost tens of thousands of lives.

Nicaraguans to vote for president

MANAGUA (R) — Nicaraguans vote for president Sunday in a passionate, polarised election that pits a right-wing populist against the Sandinista ruler who led the country through revolution and war in the 1980s.

The battle fought at the ballot box parallels the struggle that has wrenched Nicaragua for much of this century.

The two leading candidates are Arnaldo

Aleman of the Liberal Alliance, whose backers include exiles once firmly allied to a right-wing dictatorship, and Daniel Ortega, who led Nicaragua's Marxist revolutionary government from 1979-1990.

A daunting 23 candidates were on the presidential ballot, most of them from centrist parties only expected to muster a small portion of the vote.

Hurricane Lili deals severe blow to Cuban crops

HAVANA (R) — Cuban authorities counted the cost of Hurricane Lili Saturday, saying the storm had damaged thousands of homes and destroyed crops ranging from sugar cane to citrus fruits.

President Fidel Castro said the hurricane had dealt a big blow to the island.

The storm swept over the Communist-ruled nation Thursday night and Friday, dumping torrential rains over central and western areas before moving northeast to the Bahamas.

No casualties were reported.

But the damage to crops, particularly sugar cane, and to property threatens a big setback to Cuba's fragile economy, struggling to emerge from crisis caused by the collapse of the island's old economic partner the former Soviet Union.

State media, vastly increasing initial figures as fresh information came in, said more than 3,000 homes had been

completely destroyed and 26,000 had suffered some damage in the storm.

The central province of Cienfuegos was the worst hit, with some 2,000 homes destroyed and damage to crops including vegetables and coffee.

Residents of that province were still without electric power Saturday because of damage to a local power plant.

President Castro, who has toured a series of spots hit by the storm, was quoted by state media as saying the hurricane had dealt "severe blows." But he added the fact there were no deaths was a victory for citizens who had prepared well for the storm.

President Castro, speaking in Cienfuegos, said priority should be given to restoring power. Apart from Cienfuegos, many other parts of central and western Cuba were still without power.

Overall figures were not issued yet for damage to sugar cane, but figures from several provinces suggested the

coming harvest could be affected.

AIN state news agency said some 165,000 acres (66,700 hectares) of cane were damaged in Havana province, nearly three quarters of the total cane sown in the province.

In Matanzas province, authorities said 363,000 acres (146,900 hectares) of cane had been affected.

The 1996-97 harvest is due to start in December, with authorities seeking production of more than five million tonnes, following production of 4.5 million tonnes in 1995-96.

This last harvest halted a steady decline in the sector since the early 1990s and Cuba is desperate to continue the recuperation of the sector.

In another blow for foreign exchange earnings, the huge citrus growing area of Jaguey Grande in Matanzas took a battering. Authorities said some 120,000 tonnes of fruit had been blown to the ground.

Farm workers on the

Isle of Youth to the south of mainland Cuba were trying to recover some 15,000 tonnes of citrus fruit on the ground.

Prensa Latina news agency said that other crops affected included bananas, tobacco, rice, coffee and vegetables.

The national assembly postponed a session that had been due to start next Friday. Parliamentary President Ricardo Alarcon said the suspension was because new priorities had arisen.

International flights to and from Cuba, suspended Thursday night, were resumed Friday afternoon.

Hurricane Lili caused wind gusts of up to 180 kph (110 mph) in Cienfuegos and dumped torrential rains over much of the country. The heaviest rainfall was 445 mm (17 inches) in 24 hours recorded at Topes De Collantes in the Escambray mountains east of Cienfuegos.

Jordan Times

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Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MAHMOUD AL KAYED

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MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:
Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 684311, 699634

Telex: 21497 ALRAJ JO

Faxsimile: 696183

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Democracy, in ups and downs

THE JUST-RELEASED "emergency" report of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights (AOHR) levels serious accusations against the government's handling of the human rights situation in Jordan. It alleges that the government has "registered the worst record on human rights since the democratisation process began in 1989" and calls for the "return to the jurisdiction of the law" in handling such cases. The report chronicles a variety of charges against the authorities ranging from allegations of torture and arbitrary arrests to the denial of freedom of expression. But the overall tone of the report stems from the assertion that opposition to the government's political and economic policies, especially since the hike in bread prices was introduced, had led to a rapid deterioration in the delicate balance that existed during the past several years.

A first reading of these accusations gives us the impression that all is not well with our democratisation process, and we might as well ask the same question but within a different context.

While it is true that the foundation of any genuine democracy is respect for human rights and public freedoms, is it not also true that violations do occur in the oldest systems of democracy and that we were never at the point of perfection in our democratic practices, especially during times of crisis? While we are in no way justifying any wrongdoing by the government itself or opposition political groups, we have to be fair and candid enough to note that there have always been and there will continue to be ups and downs in the long road of any country's march towards perfection. The fact that AOHR was established and continues to operate in the manner it displayed yesterday means that at the very least Jordan remains on target in search of democracy and political pluralism. The other obvious fact that a senior official at the General Intelligence Department (GID) has responded to the report is another indication of the Kingdom's seriousness in this regard.

In rebutting the accusations levelled by AOHR, the GID official proposed that the alleged victims of torture go to courts to prove their claims, which is yet another sign of the authorities' determination to be held accountable for whatever actions attributed to them.

What we have before us now is a list of serious charges from a human rights group and a list of equally serious replies from the main department concerned with internal security in the country. It is the established policy in almost all advanced democracies to launch an investigation by a high-ribbon committee whenever there are charges of grave consequences against the government in office. AOHR can probably be faulted in its submissions, since it also stands accused of associating itself with political groups which oppose official policies across the board, just as much as the government is faulted for being unable or unwilling to meet with the group and discuss those charges with them, directly and unabashedly.

With such scenarios drawn out, in our minds at least, there might be no escape from the conclusion that the country needs to conduct an investigation of the human rights situation in the country by an independent group comprising people who are well-known in the field and enjoy local and international recognition. Alternatively, a special pardon by His Majesty King Hussein of those detained since the bread riots erupted in August, which is widely expected to be issued by the middle of next month, might be the right step to open a new page and resume the truly democratic life that we all should be proud of.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE PROPONENTS of reconciliation and peace with the Zionist state in Egypt, Palestine and Jordan must have felt and still feel embarrassed by their position due to the hostile attitude towards the Arabs as manifested by the government of Benjamin Netanyahu, said Bassam Emoush, a writer for Al Ra'i. Describing Mr. Netanyahu as the mad man of Israel, for endangering the whole Middle East region, the writer said that the wise people in the countries neighbouring Israel ought to reexamine their position because it is unreasonable for them to continue counting on the behaviour of a man or entrust their future to headline Zionist bent on triggering war in this sensitive region. To beg Mr. Netanyahu to come back to reason and change his government's stand would do no good to the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular, said the writer. The Egyptian, Palestinian and Jordanian leaders must definitely have alternative options and they are in a position to play winning cards, he said. For Jordan, the Wadi Araba treaty can bring no peace or security while repression and occupation continues on the western side of the river where rebellion against oppression and tyranny is far from over, according to the writer. He demanded a concerted effort and a collective action on the part of Arab states directly involved in the conflict with the Jewish state and the use of a language which would bring Mr. Netanyahu back to his senses.

Economic Review

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

'Prosperity is our choice'

DURING A seminar at Harvard University, the eminent professor, Dr. Michael Porter, guru and inventor of the concept of "competitive advantage" and the inspirer of this article, repeatedly emphasised to the seminar participants that "Prosperity is your (nation's) choice." He believes that a nation decides to be wealthy or poor. Becoming wealthy requires sacrifices and the willingness to change. Most significantly, prosperity cannot be given or loaned. It is created from within.

Billions of dollars of foreign aid can pour into Jordan every year without making its people more prosperous. No one can give Jordan a prosperous future; it must acquire this future, envisioned first by its people, as it takes a place among the competitive nations of the world.

How does a nation become prosperous? By finding out where the competitive strengths of its industries and companies lie; and by continuously upgrading these strengths, in order to compete more effectively in the global market. Revenue is increased and employment is expanded by differentiating existing products or creating new competitive ones and enhancing cooperation and rivalry among companies. As labour moves up the ladder in terms of skill and knowledge, quality production becomes a natural outcome, wages rise and a prosperous economy is thus created.

During the seminar, Dr. Porter listed practices that are typical of companies in developing countries. These habits are dangerous, poverty-creating practices and represent a map to "what should not be done," or to "what should be undone."

The first poverty-creating practice is the protectionist economic approach which tends to want to solve the ailments of a country by imposing high tariffs on imports while subsidising certain exports. Why is this practice so bad? Because it increases prices of imports to domestic consumers, allows producers to reduce the quality of their products, and gives inefficient industries an access to government funds that could be better spent on infrastructure and human development. As a result, business comes to view the government in a paternalistic manner. Rent-seeking (opportunism) and other bad practices flourish as

quality, inventiveness and competitiveness fall.

Frequent changes in government policy is second on the list of what should not be done if a nation is to prosper. Governments are usually forced into shifting policy to cover budget shortfalls or to please an angry constituency. Such a behaviour increases uncertainty in the economy and drives people to unethical practices such as the trade in government insider information.

Large-scale government job creation due to high levels of unemployment helps lower the quality of labour and its product. As a result, the government borrows to sustain an increasingly deteriorating knowledge base in both the factor and product markets. Furthermore, the nation markets itself as a hub for cheap labour to attract foreign investment, which is clearly not the way to create prosperity. The only way forward in the twenty first century is through improving quality of production.

Limited and shallow, unsophisticated financial markets lead to capital scarcity and high financial risks, thus making production even more expensive and restricting the ability of firms to expand. Firms, therefore, shy away from capital-intensive and knowledge-based production to labour-intensive and low-knowledge products. With the absence of long-term financing, long-term investment become financed with short-term loans which further worsens the case for domestic industry empowerment. Minimal investment in machinery and equipment, increased dependence on foreign partners for technical skills and know-how and low productivity are all factors which conspire to further lower the competitiveness and welfare of the nation.

Jordan does not need foreign aid, it requires only self-aid. The competitiveness of our industries lies at the heart of the solution to the nation's future. Changing the way we view business must lead us to changing the way we conduct business. We must not look to our assets as fixed but as growing, developing and continuously improving factors. And, most importantly, wealth creation starts first in the minds of all of us; it is in the collective will of the whole nation where the key to our future nests.

Education — key to Asia's economic success

MANY THEORIES about East Asian economic success are controversial. Economists argue about the importance of industrial policy, cultural critics debate the existence of "Asian values." But one explanation commands almost universal assent: an emphasis on education.

The success that countries like South Korea and Taiwan make of educating their children is often held up as an example for poorer countries in South Asia and Africa. But international comparisons also regularly show that East Asian children outperform their Western counterparts when tested on their knowledge of maths and science. In the 1995 World Competitiveness Report, Singapore and Taiwan were rated first and third on the ability of their educational systems to meet "the needs of a competitive economy."

One of the most striking characteristics of countries like Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea has been their emphasis on raising the educational standards of the whole population rather than an elite. Moreover, those developing countries that invested heavily in primary education have done much better economically than those that concentrated more on university education. In 1960, Pakistanis and South Koreans were about as rich as each other. But whereas just 30 per cent of Pakistani children were enrolled in primary schools, 94 per cent of South Koreans were. By the mid-1980s, South Korea's GDP per person was three times Pakistan's. Hard as it is to prove a direct connection, the figures are certainly suggestive.

But it is not just developing countries that are looking to the East Asian tigers. In America and Britain in particular, education debates have recently been shaped by arguments about what Asians are doing right and Westerners are doing wrong. Tests of school-children seem to show that the best of the West match the achievements of successful Asian schoolchildren. The great weakness of the rich nations — and one of the reasons their test scores look so bad compared with the East Asians — is that many more Western children fail at school. These, the failures, end up on the periphery of the labour market and often on the welfare rolls. That the wages of the unskilled in the West are falling steadily suggests that the social and budgetary costs of educational failure are certain to increase.

Unlike South Asians and Latin Americans, Americans and Britons cannot blame their relative failure on a lack of universal primary education. So some Westerners are inclined to shrug their shoulders and say that East Asian children are naturally more diligent or even more intelligent (a conclusion many Asians may quietly agree with). In any event, the achievements of Asian children brought up in the West suggest that cultural explanations, such as family support, may have a part to play. The success of Asian-Americans in gaining admission to elite universities like Harvard and the University of California has been so marked that it has provoked rows about discrimination against Asians, as the universities attempt to maintain an ethnic balance among their students.

Simply copying teaching methods may not compensate for cultural advantages like a deep commitment by parents to education. In South Korea, Taiwan and Japan, many children are sent to cramming schools in the evening to supplement their daily lessons. Examinations dominate the lives of the young far more than in the West. This may not make adolescence much fun, but it probably raises test scores.

The West is unlikely suddenly to acquire Asians' cultural traits, but it may still be able to learn from the tigers. The most impressive characteristic of their education systems is the belief that everyone can and should succeed. It is expected in Taiwan, for example, that every child will achieve a basic level of attainment by the age of 12. Classes in the first three or four years are of mixed ability. Those who fall behind are given special tuition in one-to-one catch-up classes. Primary schools tend to be much more alike in terms of the money spent on them, class sizes and exam results than in the West. The "sink school" is not something that exists in Taiwan.

Other factors may also contribute to the tigers' success. Their children work harder, with more days in the school year and more hours in the school day. Educational objectives are kept to a minimum and there is little debate about the nature of subjects and much concentration on the absorption of facts. A daily report on each child's progress is supplied to parents and the head teacher randomly inspects children's homework to monitor their progress and the

teacher's performance. Teachers enjoy considerable respect and prestige and are relatively well paid, compared with their counterparts in the West.

The Asian example is beginning to influence educational policy in the West. It has helped, for example, to bring regular tests and whole-class teaching back into fashion in Britain. Ironically, though, some Asian educationalists are beginning to voice doubts about their own methods. The strength of their educational system, with its emphasis on discipline, facts and learning by rote, may also be its weakness.

Some more advanced Asian countries, like Japan and Taiwan, are worried that current ways of doing things are stifling creativity and inventiveness among their students and that this may eventually carry an economic price. Manufacturing, with its emphasis on systems and teamwork, rewards the kind of disciplined and fact-filled students produced in the tigers. But what about the more creative service industries in which Asian countries currently lag behind America — like software design or entertainment?

Yuan-Tseh Lee, who chairs a commission currently looking into educational reform in Taiwan, is brutally critical of the exam system and its inability to identify and encourage

original talent. Similarly, Professor Hiroyuki Yoshikawa, the president of Tokyo University, says that Japanese employers are increasingly complaining that new graduates are unable to think for themselves. He laments that students returning from the West are at first full of enthusiasm and ideas, but that this tends to be soon crushed by the Japanese system. Creativity and independence, however, are not qualities that can be readily manufactured. A big shift may take decades.

Meanwhile, educational priorities in the more-established tigers are now moving towards higher education. Over 10 per cent American doctoral degrees in science and engineering in 1990 went to students from Taiwan, China and South Korea — a legitimate source of Asian pride, but also a comment on the state of universities back home. In 1991, in a league table comparing the proportions of 20-24-year-olds in higher education, South Korea was tenth, Singapore 11th and Taiwan 20th, with Canada and the United States leading the way. But change is on the way. Taiwan hopes to raise the share of its young who go to university from 18 per cent now, to 30 per cent by 2000. As in the West, a huge university expansion is under way. As both East and West revamp their education systems, lessons will flow in both directions.

LETTERS

Innocent till proven guilty

To the Editor:

REFERRING TO the article "Kabarti visits riot-hit stadium" (Jordan Times, Oct. 20, 1996), kindly be informed that in a country like Jordan, where the issues of Arab unity and solidarity are holy matters, no one denies the fact that Jordanians have been and still are the backbone and strategic depth of our Palestinians brothers.

I am stating this to flag a very dangerous statement in our newspaper regarding the riot. A statement like this one: "One witness said supporters of the Faisali Club then started chanting slogans in favour of the Israeli prime minister" is totally unacceptable and it is outrageous to find it in a cover-page or an inside-page article.

It needs more than one witness, in our faith, to condemn a person: how many millions would it take for such a statement?

Ali Ghezawi,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Human Rights

Fair trial could be flawed by human nature

By Waleed M. Sadi

Fair trial is a principal feature of practically all human rights instruments and predicated on the supposition that once certain legal safeguards are provided and secured, people suspected of crime or misdemeanour would receive a fair trial.

This presumption, however, remains flawed because in the final analysis, a human being serving as judge will have to render a judgement of guilt or innocence depending on his own assessment of the issues of fact, not to mention the issues of law.

The big question, in this context, is whether it is humanly possible for any "judge" to be so objective, fair and detached from all forms of bias or prejudice as to make a just and correct ruling even when he or she is professionally qualified.

There are, of course, legal ground rules which will guide the arbiter in his dispensation of justice, but in the final analysis, the determination of the issues of fact rests with the personal convictions of the man or woman sitting on the bench.

The right of appeal provides for another opportunity for recourse to adjudicate issues of law, as distinguished from issues of fact, but even then, there is no absolute way of knowing if a court of appeals would make an absolutely correct ruling.

As for the issues of fact, the task is even harder. Normally, the lower court will resolve one way or another this part of litigation and it is not up to the higher court to reopen these factual matters unless they are admitted and taken into consideration in a manner not consistent with the law, especially the law of evidence or the rules of procedure, etc.

Due to the recognition of this limitation on the human ability to pass judgement on issues of fact in a fairly safe manner, some jurisdictions have developed the jury system to make the necessary determination of what in fact had transpired. Last year's O.J. Simpson trial brought to fore, however, the frailties of the jury system of trial when 12 jurors returned a verdict of not guilty at a time when there was a wide spread conviction that the accused did commit the crime.

The obvious constraint on the jury system was therefore borne out by the diametrically opposed "verdicts" reached by the public on one hand and by the 12 jurors on the other. It can be argued, of course, that whereas the jury, which issued a verdict exonerating Mr. Simpson of the crime with which he was charged, was closer to the procedures of the trial than the people who were on the sidelines of the legal hassle when they incriminated him. Still the fact remains that the fate of Mr. Simpson was placed in the hands of 12 women and men whose own judgements must have been clouded by their own respective prejudices and biases.

Human frailties and racial considerations must have played a part in the jury's decision to believe one version of events that led to the killing of Mrs. Simpson rather than the other. In the absence of direct evidence linking Mr. Simpson to the killing of his wife, the jury had to decipher circumstantial pieces of evidence and come out convinced beyond reasonable doubt that the killer was the husband. The end result was that it was not humanly possible for jurors to detach themselves from subjective convictions, just as it is not humanly possible for one judge or even a three-man panel to be absolutely fair and objective.

Back in the late fifties, the University of Law in Chicago conducted a secret, in-depth examination of the merits of jury trials but ran up against a stiff wall of opposition from Washington which feared that the aim and purpose of the study was to undermine the jury system. The U.S. constitution makes it a constitutional right for Americans to be jury judged when they stand accused of a wrongdoing. Nevertheless, the findings of the university, which managed to filter out to the public, documented the long standing fears that the jury system does not provide for a fairer system of justice than non-jury trials. The only difference between the two procedures, it was established, is that a jury trial is much more expensive and considerably less efficient.

The necessary conclusion is that there is no system of justice known to man that can assure absolute justice. Relative justice, yes, but absolute justice is simply not humanly possible, no matter how sophisticated the system is.

That is why human rights conventions and treaties strive to attain a maximum amount of justice in courts of law by insisting on minimum safeguards that would minimise the margin of error and produce the optimum degree of fairness in trials.

When the judges are qualified and enjoy a high moral repute, the danger of error is reduced to a minimum. In order to assure these attributes, the state in question must be prepared to recruit the best in the judicial profession by providing not only adequate remuneration but also security, protection and independence.

Early on in the era of Islam, Islamic jurisprudence produced exemplary standards of justice. Abu Hanifa (699-769 AD.) founded the Hanafi school which advocated an independent judiciary. Abu Hanifah was then associated with the dictum that "if justice is to be assured... the judiciary must be independent of the executive." Abu Hanifa was credited with saying to his followers that "if the Caliph is guilty of encroaching upon the rights of the people, the Chief Justice should make him submit to the rule of law."

It is also recorded that in declining repeated offers to make him a chief judge, Abu Hanifa once told the ruling Caliph that "none can be fit to become a judge unless he has the strength enough to impose the law on you, your princes and your commanders." He went on to say to the ruling Caliph that "I have not that strength in me, I cannot breathe easily till I go out of your presence." To disqualify himself as head of the judicial system.

When the laws of procedure and evidence are rigorously applied by the court of first instance, there is high probability that "justice" will be rendered. The less these and other relevant laws are obeyed the less is there a chance of obtaining "relative" justice.

An accused person must be provided with legal counsel as soon as he or she is detained. The legal advice must be genuine and of high standard. Otherwise, it is not deemed sufficient for international human rights standards which are binding on all states which have ratified or acceded to them. No person can be detained for a long time without being charged and tried. Duress in all its forms and shapes is obviously a taboo and all evidence accumulated in violation of this rule would be struck down as inadmissible. Solitary confinement and incommunicado detentions are generally viewed by human rights organisations as a form of torture. Last but not least, the right of appeal is also sacrosanct.

Admittedly, the pendulum in some jurisdictions has swung too much in favour of the rights of the accused at the expense of collective human rights, to the extent that many "felons" remain free in the streets, ready to strike again and again against innocent people. Courts of law are known to have ruled against the admission of any piece of incriminating evidence in deference to legal technicalities even when the errors were not grossly prejudicial to the court of law proceedings or the rights of the accused. It is therefore conceivable, under these circumstances, for "criminals" to avoid incrimination due to police errors even when made innocently and without any intention to circumvent the law.

Developing countries often counter the call for a "relatively" fair judicial system by pointing out that it takes heavy investment to attain that noble objective, something they can ill afford given their level of underdevelopment. High-calibre judges need high salaries. Proper court decorums and sophisticated technologies also call for large budgets. Proper police work to service the administration of justice, including the conduct of acceptable forms of investigation, require a minimum level of education and sophistication that is obviously costly. Educating police on domestic and international human rights standards is an ill will to do so. Prison conditions can never be humanised without large investments. This line of argumentation is often deployed to drive home the message that there can never be full realisation of political and civil rights in isolation of the attainment of economic human rights. The administration of justice offers a classic example of where and how this submission is a valid one.

News

Emir opens Kuwaiti assembly with call for end to bickering

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwait's emir on Sunday urged the government and parliament to stop quarrelling over legislation as the crown prince warned that an "expansionist" Iraq remained a threat to national security.

"It's very important that we know the limits of legislative and executive powers and don't continue quarrelling between us," the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, said when he opened the parliament elected on Oct. 7.

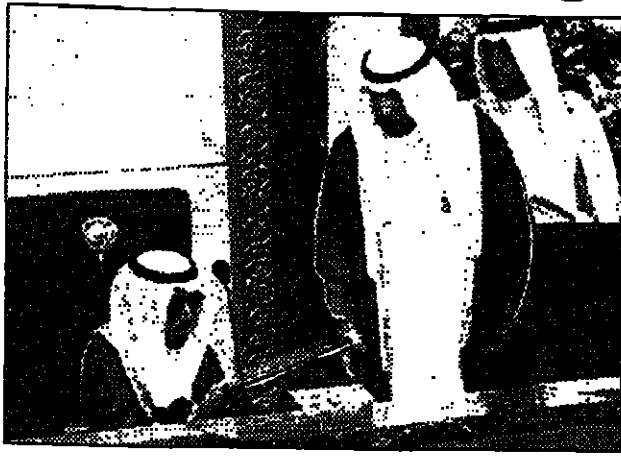
The last parliament or national assembly, which was dominated by the Islamist and liberal opposition, was often at odds with pro-government deputies and the government over legislation. The new assembly has a majority of pro-government candidates.

The emir also said the opposition was wasting its time calling for an end to the crown prince's also holding on to the job of prime minister. "We all know that this issue is the right of the emir alone," he said.

The emir renamed the crown prince, Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah, as prime minister after the previous government resigned in the wake of the parliamentary elections.

Sheikh Saad delivered the emir's address to the parliament in which he said concerns about Iraq and the country's economy topped the list.

"The continued moves and threats by the Iraqi regime still highlight its determina-



Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Jaber Ahmad Al Sabah (left) receives documents from Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Abdullah Al Sabah after the opening session of the newly elected parliament (Reuters photo)

tion to threaten the peace and security for our entire region and its aggressive and expansionist designs," he said.

"The government will continue to attach greatest importance to the international dimension of the security of the state of Kuwait," Sheikh Saad said, referring to defence pacts with the United States and other allies.

"National security, both internal and external, will continue to head the government's priorities, including building up the armed forces," he said. He also outlined economic concerns.

"Economic development faces urgent problems which we will try to resolve with a plan to rectify the course of our economic activity," Sheikh Saad said, referring to a plan backed by the International Monetary Fund. The plan includes various steps such as reducing

inflation and cutting the budget deficit, reforming the labour market and creating more private sector jobs, he said.

Saadoun reflected

An independent Kuwaiti politician narrowly beat a pro-government deputy to retain his post as speaker of parliament.

Ahmad Saadoun, who has held the speaker's job in the last three assemblies, won 30 votes against 29 votes for Jassem Khurafi, a wealthy businessman backed by the government.

Pro-government candidates won 30 of the 50 seats in the new assembly which was elected on Oct. 7, compared to 16 for Muslim fundamentalists and four for liberals.

The speaker is chosen by the parliament as well as cabinet ministers who have a right to vote in parliament.

Taleban order Kabul traffic police to shed 'English' ties

KABUL (AFP) — The Taleban militia has ordered the city's uniformed traffic policemen not to wear their regulation neckties as they are part of Western culture, officers said Sunday.

"Taleban soldiers earlier this week told us to take our ties off as they are too English," policeman Sayeed Haroon told AFP here just over three weeks after the fighters overran Kabul.

"Now I wear a full uniform and have to button my shirt up at the top although I have no tie on. It looks ridiculous, but there is nothing to do about it," he added.

Other traffic officers confirmed that Taleban fighters had ordered them to remove their black ties, and alleged that some of their colleagues had been attacked by Taleban for failing to comply with the order.

"We were very proud of our neat and dignified appearance, especially when we do duty outside key points like ministries," another officer said. "Soon we may have to wear turbans instead of peaked caps," he added.

No Taleban official was immediately available here to confirm the ban on ties had been formally issued, or whether it was being imposed by individual Taleban.

The Taleban, who all wear bumpy Islamic shalwar kameez costumes and turbans, have ordered the once modern city's women to conform to traditional and Islamic "norms" and discourage Western dress, although they have not formally outlawed it.

However, residents of the city have completely abandoned Western fashion — one of their passions under the previous government of deposed President Burhanuddin Rabbani — since the Taleban captured Kabul.

The smartly uniformed traffic police with their green uniforms and white

belts have remained a constant feature of the battered Afghan capital where most other services ceased to function long ago.

The city's major traffic junctions, which are demarcated by spent artillery shell casings, are all manned by uniformed officers who direct the traffic with batons and whistles.

Their full uniforms are something of a rarity in civil war-torn Afghanistan where after years of conflict there is scarcely a man in most factional forces who has a full uniform.

The fundamentalist Taleban, who now control about two thirds of Afghanistan, have applied their strict brand of Islamic law on the mainly rural regions they have seized in the last two years.

Since storming into the capital as the Rabbani government fled on Sept. 27, the militia — which has set up an interim administration here — have issued a string of formal decrees regulating the behaviour and appearance of relatively liberal Kabulites.

Women were immediately barred from work and school and told not to go out unnecessarily. Men were given six weeks to grow beards or face severe punishment and local officials were ordered to turn over those who shirked their Muslim prayers to the Taleban authorities.

In addition, criminals now face severe penalties if convicted: murderers will be beheaded, adulterers stoned to death and thieves will have hands or feet amputated.

The moves — particularly those relating to working women and school girls — have caused alarm both here and in the international community which has warned that foreign aid and recognition for the Taleban government could be withheld unless the militia alters its stance.



Afghan flee a village caught in the crossfire between the Taleban and forces of the ousted government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani (Reuters photo)

Arabs lead efforts to set up global system of recognition of accountants

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Arab World has taken the lead in an effort to set up a global system for recognition and accreditation of accountants in line with the requirements of international conventions that liberalise the cross-border movement of services.

The move, launched by the United Nations and followed up by a meeting this month at a meeting in Geneva, is "the most significant event in the history of accounting," said Talal Abu Ghazaleh, president of the Arab Society of Certified Accountants (ACSA), who chairs a special committee of experts entrusted with the project.

When fully realised, the project will condition countries to fulfil the requirements of the General Agreement of Tariff and Services (GATS) — the part that concerns international movement of services in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) area.

"As far as Jordan and other developing countries which are negotiating their accession to the WTO are concerned, the adoption of the project will clear the way for their professional accountants to work in any other WTO member country just as they themselves would be obliged to accept foreign accountants working in their territories," Mr. Abu Ghazaleh, a Jordanian, pointed out.

This essentially means defining education standards in terms of quality and methodology, examination parameters and procedures, quality standards and reciprocal recognition and accreditation of professionals in the field of accounting.

Such a system, he noted, "comes in implementation of the GATS agreement on professional services and cross-border movement of such services."

Mr. Abu Ghazaleh himself first proposed the idea to establish a global system of recognising and accrediting accounting professionals to a U.N. meeting in 1993 and another gathering of experts on accounting and reporting practices. Both meetings unanimously accepted the proposal, and the Geneva meeting last week was the first gathering of the committee of experts, which includes seven members in their individual capacities and a representative each from the United Nations and the World Trade Organisation.

The meeting formed sub-committees, which will submit recommendations to another full committee in New Delhi in February next year. One of the first recommendations is expected to be a definite time-frame for the system to be in place.

Mr. Abu Ghazaleh said a tentative timeframe could be five years.



Talal Abu Ghazaleh

The very concept of the various conventions that make up the World Trade Organisation is barrier-free movement of goods and services. As such, there also have to be firm bases and standards that define the various aspects of cross-border trade and services.

"There has never been a cross-border system of accrediting and recognising accountants," noted Mr. Abu Ghazaleh, adding that national societies and leading accounting firms always dominated the field.

With the introduction of the proposed project, there will be a set of international parameters governing accounting and reporting practices which will in turn will be the basic criteria for global recognition of accountants, he said.

This essentially means

Ex-detainees claim torture

(Continued from page 1)

days and arrested his uncle and father in order to force him to surrender to the authorities. Mr. Majali was arrested and later charged with attempting to topple the government and held in solitary confinement at the GID prison.

He claimed he was later moved from the GID prison to the Sawaqa detention centre where he was subjected to physical torture and had his head shaved.

Mr. Majali was released on a JD10,000 bail after 52 days of detention, and was dismissed from his job at the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company.

Nawas Shdeikat said he was arrested on Aug. 20 outside

the anti-Zionism Office in Amman and released seven days later.

He was rearrested on Aug. 31 and detained at the GID prison where he staged an eight-day hunger-strike.

Mr. Shdeikat said he was later moved to Sawaqa prison before being released after 25 days in detention.

The last alleged torture victim also claimed being detained without any specific charges against him, subjected to physical torture and released on bail.

The charges of torture were subsequently denied by officials who said such allegations were "baseless" (see separate story).

Despite the government

denials, Islamic Action Front Deputy Bassam Emoush supported the allegations. "I personally saw proof of (torture) on prisoners' bodies," he told the Jordan Times.

Dr. Emoush also said the security forces had "informed cases, broken into the offices of political parties. He also charged that 'these offices are being bugged on a regular basis'."

Deputy Emoush, the chairman of the Public Freedoms Committee at the Lower House of Parliament, also claimed that many citizens had been detained, illegally charged with lese majeste because of their ideological and political beliefs that differ from that of the government.

French-European role is necessary to balance peace process — Chirac

(Continued from page 1)

the sidelines ... by encouraging the peace process on the economic level."

Mr. Chirac and Mr. Assad held almost four hours of talks on the peace process and Lebanon before an unscheduled second meeting Sunday on economic links between their two countries.

France and Syria signed an agreement to resolve Damascus' debt to Paris. Mr. Chirac announced.

French officials would not give details of the terms, but Syria's debt to France is about 1.8 billion francs (\$346 million), according to French diplomats.

"We have put our affairs in order on the technical and financial levels," Mr. Chirac said.

Mr. Chirac arrived in Syria to a red carpet welcome Saturday at the start of his six-day Middle East tour. He was to hold a fourth meeting with Mr. Assad on Monday before heading for Israel.

Israel's ambassador to France, meanwhile, played down differences over Mr. Chirac's programme in Israel and his country's support for the Arab position on the stalled peace process.

"They have been blown out of all proportion," said Avi Pazner. "President Chirac will be received here as a friend."

"We have no objection at all to the friendship between France and the Arab states ... As long as France maintains a balance between the Arabs and Israel, it is OK," he said.

Mr. Chirac said at a banquet in his honour hosted by Mr. Assad late Sunday that "France and Europe must be present besides the parties, as friends, as a force for proposals and not just as partners in reconstruction."

The Arab League, meanwhile, praised Mr. Chirac over

his decision to go to Israel without his foreign minister, saying the change of programme was a "slap in the face" for the Jewish state.

Herve de Charette will not accompany Mr. Chirac to Israel in protest at Israeli opposition to a planned visit by the foreign minister to the Orient House, the unofficial headquarters of the Palestinian National Authority in East Jerusalem.

But French officials moved to quell anger in Israel over Mr. Chirac's decision not to make a speech to the Israeli parliament by announcing the president had amended his schedule to allow a visit to the chamber.

The French president is also to visit the Palestinian territories, where he is to address the elected legislative council, before travelling on to Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt.

In his speech on Sunday, Mr. Chirac said changes must be made to the framework of the U.S.-sponsored peace process to allow Europe, the largest aid donor to the Palestinians, a role alongside the United States, he said.

"Together we must put the peace process back on the rails and enable it to succeed," he told Mr. Assad, whose peace talks with Israel have been frozen since February.

French officials said Mr. Chirac was not demanding that the European Union (EU) sit in on the negotiations. But the current negotiating system had shown its limits since the new Israeli government had sought to go back on understandings reached by its predecessor and the Arabs felt the United States was unbalanced, they said.

As an example of a possible Middle East role, a French official cited the way French and EU diplomacy had complemented U.S. negotiating efforts in Bosnia, most recently by proposing a two-year stabilisation period to consolidate peace there.

Group decries 'curbs' on freedom of expression

(Continued from page 1)

released or acquitted," Mr. Dahleh said.

The AOHR report listed the names of the journalists who were arrested and released after questioning and others who were still in detention. These include Fadi Rimawi, Nihad Hattar, Fuad Hussein, Hittani Asmar, Nayef Tawara, Khaled Kassabeh, Malek Athamneh, Namek Al Tal, Rakan Al Sa'aydeh, Taha Abu Reden, Abdullah Abu Roman, Osama Rantisi and Olayan Olayan.

Mr. Dahleh attributed what he described as a sharp decline in the authorities' tolerance towards differing points of view to opposition to the government's political and economic policies.

Another violation of which the authorities were accused was the misuse or incorrect application of legislation "with the aim of violating the rights of some citizens or intimidating them."

The report said that "the law must be applied by the authorities in the penal code specifically Article 195."

"This law was originally created to prevent slander of His Majesty the King. But many citizens are detained on the charge of slander ... hence the organisation calls for either the cancellation of this code or its amendment," the report said.

Increased political opposition to the government's economic policies, one of them being the recent increase in the prices of bread, flour and fodder, had led to arbitrary arrests, it said.

"The bread riots led the government to take military measures ... using massive force against civilians ... Security

and military forces detained and questioned a large number of civilians without directing any charges against most of them," stated the report, adding that the number of detainees registered by the organisation had exceeded 300.

"In addition, many minors were detained... their homes were subjugated... with the sole aim of terrifying citizens," it asserted.

The report claimed that the curfew imposed on towns like Karak and Tafieh subjected citizens to undue psychological pressures "which suggest the authorities' desire to impose the principle of collective punishment for revenge."

The report accused the government of "subjecting detainees to physical and mental torture." The AOHR "has received many documented complaints and testimonies of torture cases..." the report said.

"We have heard testimonies from people who were beaten, had their toe nails and moustaches plucked out. Some political detainees had their heads shaved and photos of them were taken as murderers," said Mr. Dahleh, adding the AOHR had also received complaints that detainees affiliated with Islamic parties were tortured.

"(These acts) can only be described as barbaric... leading us to call for the formation of a committee to investigate these cases and punish those responsible for them," Mr. Dahleh said.

According to the report, in the wake of the recent incidents the AOHR formed an emergency committee which

used to receive complaints and send letters to officials. Members of the committee visited Jwaldah and Sawaqa prisons, met with detainees and heard their complaints in the presence of security personnel.

The committee reviewed the cases and complaints and concluded that "the events in the south were a public reaction to the government's economic measures particularly pertaining to the price increases."

"The Arab Organisation for Human Rights asks officials to take the necessary measures to restore the situation to its normal status, release the detainees and close this chapter," Mr. Dahleh said.

The organisation has, since the beginning of the year, attempted to initiate dialogue with the prime minister concerning human rights abuses, he said.

But "the prime minister has not replied to any of the eight letters sent to him by the organisation between Aug. 20 and Sept. 10," Mr. Dahleh said.

"The AOHR recalls with regret these situations... and calls for a reassessment by the government of its position towards human rights cases and its cooperation with this organisation for the benefit of the citizens, especially since the AOHR is a non-governmental political organisation," Mr. Dahleh told the news conference.

"The organisation is presenting this emergency report to express its deep concern at the aggravations of the human rights situation in Jordan and calls on the government ... to return to the jurisdiction of the law and order and respect for human rights and cancel all measures that conflict with these rights," the statement concluded.

Ekeus, Iraqi officials in tug-of-war

(Continued from page 1)

In Baghdad this month, described Iraqi disclosures of past weapons programmes made after the June pact as flawed and incomplete. Baghdad submitted nine more letters to try to clarify the issues.

Since starting his search in April 1991, Mr. Ekeus has sent 373 inspection teams to Iraq with 3,574 inspectors.

Helicopters with monitoring gear helped hunt for weapons and documents. U.S. intelligence reports, satellite pictures and surveillance by U.S. spy planes also aided the effort.

On the ground, Mr. Ekeus has set up the most advanced monitoring mechanism to date to check that Iraq's arms industry churns out no banned materials.

Under U.S. pressure, the U.N. put on hold a deal it signed with Baghdad in May that would have permitted Iraq to sell limited amounts of oil for humanitarian purposes.

"If Ekeus declares Iraq clean of weapons, then a clash between the U.S. on the one hand and France and Russia on the other will become inevitable."

He also reiterated Thursday that UNSCOM continued to have concerns about Iraq's biological and chemical weapons capability.

Diplomats and analysts in Baghdad believe Iraq will in the end get a clean bill of health from Mr. Ekeus but doubt whether this would automatically give it the freedom to export oil freely.

The United States, they say, will view weapons destruction as only one of several conditions Iraq must fulfil, although the relevant Security Council resolution shows that other demands do not apply to oil sales.

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Both Paris and Moscow are owed billions of dollars by Iraq and have commercial reasons for wanting to see it solvent again.

Before leaving New York, Mr. Ekeus said Thursday he was not optimistic about his trip but urged Baghdad to demonstrate "political will" to end the concealment of weapons of mass destruction from U.N. monitors.

He said it would be a "major achievement" if Iraq could account for a number of long-range missiles which could be armed with biological or chemical weapons to reach neighbouring states.

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PUK puts up stiff resistance

(Continued from page 1)

Talabani and Tehran deny.

The PUK launched a counter-offensive against Mr. Barzani's forces 10 days ago, recapturing Sulaimaniyeh and other territory it had lost last month.

The PUK pushed the KDP back to the outskirts of Erbil, which Mr. Barzani's fighters seized on Aug. 31. But late last week the KDP launched a counter-attack of its own.

After seizing Koi Sanjak, the hometown of Mr. Talabani, on Friday, KDP fighters captured the town of Ranya on Saturday and were closing in on Sulaimaniyeh from the west and north.

The fighting has fuelled new fears of an exodus of refugees. A Western aid official said 65 families fled overnight Friday towards the Iranian border, fearing the fall of the city to the KDP.

The official Iranian news agency IRNA said PUK leaders had begun preparations to evacuate

Sulaimaniyeh, the second largest city in Iraqi Kurdistan.

IRNA also said the pro-Iranian Kurdish Hizbollah has handed over territory under its control in northern Iraq to the advancing KDP forces to "prevent further bloodshed."

British Member of Parliament Emma Nicholson was in Iran to visit Iraqi Kurdish refugee camps and discuss sending aid amid warnings "from Tehran of a human catastrophe," IRNA added.

Fariz blames small, limited capital markets for Arab capital flight

AMMAN (Petra) — Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Governor Ziyad Fariz said Sunday that capital markets in Arab countries were limited and small in size and that the lack of efficient and organised centres does not help in stimulating investments.

As a result of this situation, Arab capital is fleeing the region to international capital markets, said Dr. Fariz in remarks at the opening of a three-day seminar on capital markets organised at the Institute for Banking Studies (IBS) in cooperation with Citibank Jordan.

Dr. Fariz pointed out that the estimated total Arab capital invested in Arab markets stood at \$50 billion in 1995 whereas Arab capi-

tal invested in international markets in the same year was estimated at \$670 billion.

The IBS has organised this seminar to draw the attention to the impact of rapid developments and changes in world capital markets on the local Arab markets and the Arab economic development.

The Arab capital markets have been facing further challenges including the creation of the European Union and other world economic blocs, Dr. Fariz said adding that capital markets have in the past few years witnessed drastic changes and the emergence of financial instruments that pose a serious challenge to the Arab markets.

While these develop-

ments continue to emerge, the capital markets of Jordan and the other Arab states remain lagging behind and unable to develop, he added.

Furthermore, the problems in the Arab World are bound to increase the challenges that face the Arab capital markets, said Dr. Fariz who noted that these problems include, among other things, the lack of sufficient funds for financing reconstruction and economic development schemes at a time when Arab governments continue to report deficits in their fiscal budgets and face the problem of paying foreign debts.

The CBJ governor called on various institutions to help improve the investment climate in the Jordan-

ian as well as other Arab states to attract investments especially in the peace era which, he said, is bound to require vast capital for regional development projects.

He urged the IBS to maintain close cooperation with various Arab financial institutions and banks to achieve the aspired goals.

IBS Dean Adib Haddad said the seminar will focus attention on the experiments of advanced nations in steering capital towards development and other schemes. He also said that the institute has over the past three years organised 377 training seminars benefiting 6,700 officials in financial institutions and banks around the country.



Central Bank Governor Ziyad Fariz (second from right) Sunday opens the seminar on capital markets at the Institute for Banking Studies which is headed by Adib Haddad (third from right) (Petra photo)

Israel economy faces much slower growth

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel's economic growth is slowing more than originally believed, preliminary estimates by the Central Bureau of Statistics have revealed.

It said gross domestic product (GDP) would rise only 3.8 per cent in 1996, to 303.3 billion shekels, against a 7.1 per cent rise last year. GDP per capita will reach 50,000 shekels.

Its preliminary estimates for the 1996 national accounts are based on figures for the first six to nine months.

In June, when preparing the 1997 budget proposal, the treasury had forecast

GDP growth at 5.5 per cent for 1996. Many economists recently have scaled back their forecasts and the treasury will present its own revised estimates when it submits the budget to parliament at the end of October.

Israel is already facing a shortfall in tax revenues this year, which has led government officials to predict that the 1996 budget deficit will surpass the targeted 7.6 billion shekels by about four billion shekels.

The government plans to cut 4.9 billion shekels or 3.2 per cent of spending in 1997, though this still needs parliamentary approval.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu already has said a steeper cut may be needed. The Central Statistics Bureau (CSB) estimated that exports of goods and services would increase 3.7 per cent to 93.1 billion shekels against a 10.9 per cent rise in 1995. The treasury in June had forecast an increase of 6.9 per cent.

Imports of goods and services will grow 7.6 per cent, to 142 billion shekels, against an 8.4 per cent rise in 1995, the bureau said.

Total investment was estimated would rise 6.2 per cent to 72.7 billion shekels, slowing from 10.6 per cent

growth in 1995.

Investment in residential construction will increase 12.2 per cent against 20.0 per cent in 1995. The treasury had forecast an increase of 27.2 per cent.

Private consumption will grow an estimated 6.0 per cent to 189.8 billion shekels against 7.3 per cent growth last year.

Business sector GDP will rise 4.0 per cent against a 9.0 per cent gain last year. The treasury had forecast a 6.5 per cent increase for 1996.

The savings rate will fall, said the CSB. Savings will total four per cent of national income against five per cent in 1995.

Public consumption is expected to rise by 4.2 per cent in 1996 against 0.6 per cent in 1995.

According to economists, the Israeli economy has suffered a sharp slowdown this year amid gloom over Prime Minister Netanyahu's hard-line peace policies.

Israel's balance of payments deficit is expected to climb to a record \$11.5 billion this year, up from \$9.8 billion in 1995.

A key factor in the deficit is a 5.8 per cent drop in tourism revenues which had soared 18 per cent last year as visitors flocked to the country following the 1993 Israeli-Palestinian peace accords.

Economists cite the turnaround in tourism as symbolic of the political contribution to the economic slowdown.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF	YEN	DM
US Dollar	1.5415	0.6291	1.2680	112.55	1.3514	1537.32	1.7297	5.2060	
DE Mark	0.6487	1.0000	0.4077	0.8223	72.99	0.6761	996.84	1.1218	3.3765
GB Sterling	1.5895	1.5895	1.0000	2.0186	176.70	2.1451	2442.57	2.7494	8.2749
CH Franc	0.7888	121.52	0.4958	1.0000	38.74	1.3654	1211.92	126.06	4.1041
JP Yen	0.0089	1.3690	0.5586	1.1261	1.0000	13.85	153.61	4.6234	
CA Dollar	0.7400	1.1299	0.4675	0.9257	1.20	1125.25	1.2680	3.8263	
IT Lira	0.0007	1.0021	0.4083	0.0824	1367.99	0.6785	11.24	3.3842	
NL Guilder	0.5781	89.09	0.3635	73.30	65.02	0.7611	888.52	3.0985	
FR Franc	0.1921	0.2960	0.1208	24.3472	21.59	0.2595	33.21	33.2100	

Energy			Mid-East Currencies		
Oil	Lat	Prev	Currency	USD	DEM
Brent	26.05	25.50	SA Rial	0.2666	0.4113
W. Texas	26.75	25.35	AE Dirham	0.2723	0.41999
Bony	26.05	25.50	BH Dinar	3.3337	5.14139
Dubai	21.85	21.31	KW Dinar	0.3770	4.09165
UL Gas	231.00	228.00	CY Pound	2.131	3.2849

Metal Prices			Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)		
Metal	Bid	Offer	Currency	1 Month	3 Months
Gold (oz's)	380	380.5	USD	5.25	5.40
Silver (oz's)	4.89	4.91	GBP	5.81	5.74
Platinum (oz's)	383.6	384.6	JPY	0.38	0.38
AL (3 Months)	1359	1362	DEM	2.84	2.81
CU (3 Months)	1946	1951	FRF	3.37	3.37
Zinc (3 Months)	1018	1023	CHF	1.37	1.43
Lead (3 Months)	720	725	ITL	8.06	7.87
NL (3 Months)	7050	7080			

Main Equity Indices			JOD Cross Rates		
Exchange	Index	Value	Currency	Buy	Sell
New York	DOW JONES	#NIA DRP	US Dollar	0.708	0.710
New York	S&P 500	#NIA DRP	GB Sterling	1.1242	1.1288
London	FT-SE 100	#NIA DRP	DE Mark	0.4586	0.4609
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	#NIA DRP	CH Franc	0.5576	0.5604
Paris	CAC 40	#NIA DRP	FR Franc	0.1358	0.1385
Frankfurt	DAX	#NIA DRP	JP Yen	0.63	0.6332
			NL Guilder	0.4089	0.4109
			IT Lira	0.4599	0.4622

Energy			JOD Cross Rates		
Commodity	Lat	Delivery	Currency	Buy	Sell
Coffee (c/lbs)	118.5	Spot	US Dollar	0.708	0.710
Cocoa (S/ton)	1466	Spot	GB Sterling	1.1242	1.1288
Sugar (S/ton)	326.5	Spot	DE Mark	0.4586	0.4609
Wheat (S/ton)	161	Spot	CH Franc	0.5576	0.5604
Soya (c/lbs)	21.62	Spot	FR Franc	0.1358	0.1385
Tea (S/ton)	115	Spot	JP Yen	0.63	0.6332
Barley (S/ton)	2.51	Spot	NL Guilder	0.4089	0.4109
Rice (S/ton)	485	Spot	IT Lira	0.4599	0.4622

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THE Daily Crossword

by Frank R. Jackson

ACROSS

- Angry
- Relief to poor
- Partly open
- Site of the games
- Armchair
- Field mouse
- Revolutionary
- General Wayne
- Soprano
- Frances of old
- Seize suddenly
- Not as large
- Poetic contraction
- Blood conduit
- Calendar spans: abbr.
- Electronic machines, for short
- Memory
- River to the Elbe
- Hawkeye State
- Painting and sculpture
- Come in view
- Dignitary of the church
- Gets even
- Short reminder
- Brink
- Utah's state flower
- Source of poi
- Boatman's need
- Strike quickly
- Tiny amount
- Diplomat's forte
- Pouch
- Issue forth
- Camping places for troops
- Be vanquished
- Vodka drink
- Diva's song
- Bad happenings
- Showed over
- Bark sharply
- Protruberance
- Roofers' item

DOWN

- NFL team
- Middle East country
- Mother of Castor and Pollux
- Related on the mother's side
- Ballerina
- Wood for bats
- Zodiac sign
- Parson's house
- Thwart
- Concerning grandparents
- Blackbeard's emblem
- Tree
- Raises
- Neck part
- Devious method
- Old-timer, briefly
- Extraordinary one
- Crocus part
- Herb
- Maple, for one
- Agas and ages
- Gluck, diva of yore
- Heroic account
- Large: pref.
- Blood carrier
- Thoroughly acquainted with
- Bribe
- Speck
- Container
- Mythological merry-makers
- Postpone
- "That's —"
- Casals'
- instrument
- Dromedary
- Certain tide
- Type of rubber
- Quod —
- demonstrandum
- "Auld Lang"
- Aged
- Sugar suffix

Peanuts

Andy Capp

Mutt'n' Jeff

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR MONDAY OCTOBER 21, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carrot Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Know what it is that your closest friend expects of you. Make sure you study business matters carefully and avoid confusion which could occur in the days ahead if you are not prepared to handle any circumstances.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 21) Study the contracts you have made with outside fellow associates today and make sure there are no errors which could cause difficulty. Show you can keep your side of the bargain which will improve your reputation.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This is a fine day today to get right into career activities which await your attention. A fellow associate has good ideas for any projects you have been given, so listen carefully to what is presented and use it.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Get that amusement matter handled in an efficient manner and then you can have some fun with close friends. Keep busy expressing some special talent you possess and then you will gain recognition from those in charge.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Try to improve the conditions today around you at home and make your residence a fashion location which you can be proud to invite others into. Entertain guests later this evening and show your hosting abilities.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Vital calls should be made today which have been put off and thereby you can be successful in your career activities. Get into statements and reports which are crucial at this time for your success in business.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) Get your home organized today and then handle other important affairs. Obtain financial advice from experts later this evening and make use of this information to make the correct business decisions.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Get your appearance improved today, so that you will gain the confidence to handle any career matters which could appear. If you go out socially later this evening, be with persons whom you know and trust.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Be careful today in trying to improve relationships with those you love. Don't permit strangers to interfere in your career activities, otherwise you could discover that your ideas for success will disappear.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Study your personal aims today and seek out the advice of fellow associates who can make good suggestions. Obtain the assistance of good friends who can be helpful in attaining them and make your life more successful.

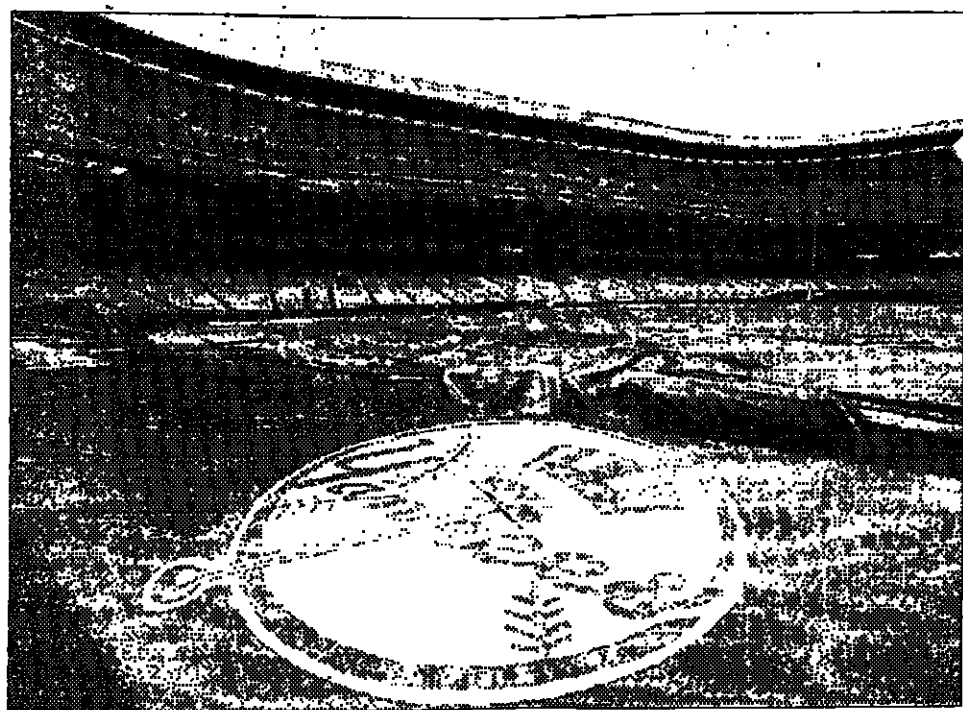
AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Make a good impression today on one who can assist you in gaining your most important aims and follow the advice which you are given. Later this evening can be good if you go to fun activities with your loved ones.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Make a worthwhile new contact today and you will discover this association will be fruitful in the days ahead. Combining good judgment with the new hunches should get you fine results in your career activities.

Birthstone of October: Opal — Tourmaline

Jordan Times, Monday, October 21, 1996

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An empty Yankee Stadium is pounded by driving rain as game one of the 92nd World Series between the Atlanta Braves and the New York Yankees was cancelled (Reuters photo)

Rain washes out World Series opener

NEW YORK (AFP) — Reigning World Series champion Atlanta watched a heavy rain wash away some of their momentum while a long wait between games extended into a full week for the New York Yankees.

A downpour washed out Saturday's scheduled opening game of the 92nd World Series here, pushing back the opener until Sunday and game two until Monday.

A concern for the Braves might be disrupting the batting rhythm that saw them pound St. Louis 14-0, 3-1, and 15-0, rallying from a 3-1 deficit to capture the National League title.

"We're anxious to keep going," Atlanta third baseman Chipper Jones said. "We want to keep playing while we are on such a great roll."

Atlanta's John Smoltz, a 24-game winner this year, and New York's Andy Pettitte, a left-hander who went 21-8, remain scheduled to start the series debut.

The postponement was the first rainout in the best-of-seven championship since game seven in 1986.

The storm gave Atlanta players a respite after they won three games in four days to take the National League crown last Thursday, then spent Friday travelling and practicing for the first time at Yankee Stadium.

"We're in good shape because none of our pitchers have pitched on less than four days rest," Atlanta manager Bobby Cox said. "Now with the extra day, everybody is ready to go."

"In our last three games, our bats have really come to life," Cox said. "But momentum is pitching."

Atlanta has the top staff pitching staff in the game with Smoltz, former pitcher of the year Tom Glavine and four-time pitcher of the year Greg Maddux plus veteran Denny Naegle as a fourth starter and relievers such as Steve Avery and ace closer Mark Wohlers.

Naegle was set to pitch game two, followed by Maddux and Glavine. But Glavine will likely pitch Monday and be available for another start later in the series if needed.

With games three through five still set for Tuesday through Thursday in Atlanta, the major question for the Yankees is who will be the fourth man in their pitching rotation.

Pettitte will be followed by Jimmy Key, another Southpaw, and David Cone. But New York has struggled to find a fourth opening hurler. Kenny Rogers is the likely choice despite poor playoff showings at Texas and Baltimore.

"Both pitching staffs are great. Both have good hitting. It comes down to who executes better," Yankee

catcher Jim Leyritz said. "They are the world champions so it's great to be playing them."

Of course, the rain has to stop first. The most epic rain tale in series lore came in 1911, when six consecutive days of rain forced a week-long gap between games three and four between Philadelphia and the New York Giants.

This is the fourth world series in five to feature the Braves.

Atlanta won their first title last year by stopping Cleveland in six games.

The Braves are trying to be the first National League champion to win back-to-back World Series crowns since Cincinnati turned the trick 20 years ago. It has been done only four times in NL history.

"It means a great deal to us," Atlanta pitcher Tom Glavine said.

"It solidifies our place in history," Toronto was the most recent repeat champion, winning the series after taking the American League title in 1992 and 1993.

The Yankees seek their 23rd World Series victory in their unprecedented 34th series appearance, but their first crown since 1978. New York had not won the American League crown to qualify for the series since 1981.

Suker hat-trick fires Real Madrid to the top

MADRID (R) — Strikers Davor Suker and Predrag Mijatovic fired Real Madrid to the top of the Spanish First Division on Saturday with five of the goals in their 6-1 home win over Real Sociedad.

Deportivo Coruna move into second place on goal difference after beating Espanyol 2-0, with Barcelona dropping to third — one point back — ahead of their game with Logrones Sunday.

Suker scored a hat-trick and Mijatovic struck twice as Real Madrid played their best football of the season despite going behind after just 10 minutes.

Mijatovic was in particularly fine form, setting up Suker for one of his goals, forcing another own-goal and gaining a penalty, from which Suker scored.

Both Suker, who shone for Croatia in Euro 96, and Mijatovic, who is from Montenegro, had struggled to find their form since moving to the Spanish capital in the off season.

The result was a relief for real coach Fabio Capello, whose side had been hit by a flu bug in the days before the match.

Deportivo Coruna started nervously against Espanyol but were settled by a goal shortly after the break by Brazilian striker Ronaldo and they ran out easy winners as Frenchman Mikael Madar added a second.

In other games, Zaragoza's poor run continued with a 2-1 defeat at first division newcomers Extremadura, a side that had not won a single point in the opening seven games of the season.

The loss is likely to increase the pressure on coach Victor Fernandez, in a season in which four sides face automatic relegation from the first division.

Valladolid moved up to a surprising fifth place after beating Compostela 3-1, and Hercules won their first point of the season with a 1-1 home draw with Oviedo.

Wenger surprise as Arsenal reach Premiership summit

LONDON (AFP) — Arsenal reached the summit of the Premiership table with no goals but incident aplenty against Coventry at Highbury on Saturday with new manager Arsene Wenger admitting: "I did not even know we were top."

In the south London derby, Wimbledon scorched Chelsea 4-2 at Stamford Bridge to move into second place on goal difference.

In spite of going top for the first time in four years, the match at Highbury was marred by Steve Ogrizovic accusing Ian Wright of breaking his nose.

Coventry keeper Ogrizovic, who was carried away with a bloodied face, said: "Ian Wright knows in his heart of hearts what he's done and I know what he's done."

"I was on the ground and he blatantly kned me in the nose. It is difficult for referees to see what is happening in situations like this but I just hope somebody at the club will take Ian to task over this."

New Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said: "Frankly, I did not see what happened. I know that Ian Wright had a chance to score and the goalkeeper went down."

Wenger said of the performance: "I am 50 percent pleased with the team. They showed a great willingness to go forward and a good quality of spirit."

Coventry manager Ron Atkinson said: "We knew we would have to come here and battle because Arsenal are top of the league and playing well. I'm happy because it was Arsenal's first blank here this season."

Wimbledon's 4-2 win over Chelsea at Stamford Bridge left manager Joe Kinnear with a broad smile: "I think we frightened them to death today and the kids of mine are getting better and better as the weeks go by."

Chelsea boss Ruud Gullit, who put himself on in the 55th

minute in a bid to bolster Chelsea's faltering attack, said: "Football at this level is about the small details and today we just weren't very good in those areas."

Wimbledon captain Vinnie Jones added: "The spirit in camp is better than it has ever been. We've got to do the things we're good at and as long as we keep doing them we're a match for any team in the country."

Bryan Robson slammed his players for surrendering 3-0 at home to Tottenham.

"That's our worst of the season — Tottenham gave us a lesson."

Tottenham manager Gerry Francis explained that careful planning had brought the win: "We worked very hard on our tactics just as we did last year because we do play differently."

Leeds manager George Graham was deeply critical after their 2-0 defeat at Aston Villa. He said: "Without doubt that's the worst we've performed since I came to Leeds."

"What areas were we poor at? I would say at the back in midfield and up front. There is no question that we are new blood."

Villa manager Brian Little was delighted to have ended a run of seven matches without a win: "Some people may have thought we've been a bit complacent, but it's been more to do with a lack of confidence and as the game went on we got better."

Blackburn manager Ray Harford found his missing inspiration as his bottom-of-the-table side grabbed a valuable point against Sheffield Wednesday.

Harford said: "We had three points from nine games last week, now we've got four from 10. It's a bit early to talk about today being a turning point, but if we can get a couple of wins on the trot then it changes the whole picture."

Monaco crush Nice in French Riviera clash

PARIS (R) — Nigeria's Viktor Ikpeba led Monaco to a 4-1 victory over neighbouring Nice on Saturday, taking the team from the principality to second place in the French first division.

Ikpeba, who scored twice for Monaco in their 4-2 victory over Borussia Moenchengladbach in the UEFA Cup on Tuesday, grabbed two more in the French Riviera clash after Nice had taken an early lead. Brazil's Sonny Anderson also scored twice.

The victory put pressure on Auxerre, who travel to the French capital for an appetising clash with league leaders Paris St Germain on Sunday.

Auxerre, the reigning champions, now trail Monaco by two points on 21, while PSG remain comfortable leaders on 28.

Monaco had to fight back from a seventh minute goal for Nice by Liberia's James Debbah.

Ikpeba struck with a brilliant header in the 35th minute, followed in the 52nd minute by a spectacular second goal involving a succession of acrobatic volleys which ended with Anderson scoring.

Ikpeba made it three for Monaco when he nodded in from a free kick by Scot



Emmanuel Petit of Monaco (R) fights for control of the ball with Nice defender Zoran Milinkovic (L) during their French soccer league match in Monte Carlo (Reuters photo)

John Collins on the hour and Anderson wrapped up the match with eight minutes left.

Nantes confirmed they were back in form after a disastrous start to the season, beating Bordeaux 3-1. Marseille, by contrast, struggled to recover the sort of form which made them European champions three years ago. They were held to a goalless draw at bottom-placed Nancy and lost young defender Pierre Issa, their sixth player to be sent off in 13 matches this season.

Philippoussis aims for 1st ATP title

TOULOUSE (AFP) — Australia's Mark Philippoussis battles it out with Sweden's Magnus Larsson in the Toulouse final here on Sunday in a quest for his first ever title on the ATP circuit.

Fourth seed Philippoussis completed a rugged fight-back against compatriot Mark Woodforde to win 2-6, 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (9-7) while Larsson proved the better of Chile's top seed Marcelo Rios 6-4, 6-4 in Saturday's semi-finals.

Larsson, who won this title two years ago, is in the kind of form which put him into the top 10 in the summer of 1995 before a right foot injury spelt a fall down the rankings.

A first ever tournament win would do no harm for Philippoussis, who fell from 19th place to his current 38th since the end of September.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Holmes retains WBC middleweight title

WASHINGTON (AFP) — American Keith Holmes stopped Briton Richie Woodhall in the 12th round on Saturday to keep his World Boxing Council middleweight title. Woodhall, the European champion, suffered the first defeat of his pro career when the referee stopped the fight at 2:32 of the final round. Holmes, who took his record to 30-1 with 20 knockouts, was evenly matched through most of the fight, but went on the attack in the final three rounds.

Merseyside Derby postponed due to heavy rain

LIVERPOOL (R) — The Merseyside Derby between Liverpool and Everton was postponed on Sunday because of heavy rain. The premier league match had been due to start at Liverpool's Anfield ground at 1400 GMT but the ground was waterlogged. No new date has yet been set.

38 police hurt as Polish soccer fans clash

WARSAW (AFP) — Thirty-eight policemen were hurt Saturday in clashes with rioting fans of the Polish soccer club Lech from Poznan after they saw their team beaten 2-0 by Legia of Warsaw, the private radio Zet reported. Police used water-cannon to disperse the rioters and arrested 14 people, the radio said, while five police cars and a number of shops were damaged. Similar but less serious incidents also occurred Saturday at Wroclaw after the match between the local team and Lodz.

Rain washes out Hong Kong finals

HONG KONG (AFP) — Rains washed out the singles and doubles finals of the \$722,000 Hong Kong tennis championships here on Sunday. Organisers were forced to postpone the singles final between Australian Patrick Rafter and American Vincent Spadea until Monday. The doubles final featuring Canada's Grant Connell and Zimbabwe's Byron Black against Australians Andrew Florent and Joshua Eagle will follow the singles final. Tournament Director Brian Carton said the prize money would be shared by the finalists should bad weather force the cancellation of all matches on Monday. The singles final is worth a total of \$285,000 while the doubles final is worth \$2,000.

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Dostum proposes truce throughout Afghanistan

Combined agency dispatches

AFGHAN WARLORD General Abdul Rashid Dostum has proposed a countrywide ceasefire in Afghanistan from Monday noon (0730 GMT), a Taliban minister said Sunday.

The proposal was conveyed to the Taliban leadership by Pakistani Interior Minister Nasserullah Babar, who is currently engaged in shuttle diplomacy between Afghan factions, the Taliban's Deputy Foreign Minister Abdul Jalil said.

Mr. Babar who held a two-hour meeting with General Dostum at his Mazar-e-Sharif base in northern Afghanistan earlier in the day, flew into the militia's headquarters in southwestern Kandahar city late Sunday.

The Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) quoted Mr. Jalil as saying that Mr. Babar held a 30-minute meeting with acting Foreign Minister Mulla Mohammed Ghaus in Kandahar.

The Pakistani minister told Mr. Ghaus that Gen. Dostum had proposed "a ceasefire from 12.00 p.m. Monday on all fronts," in Afghanistan, the Pakistan-based private news agency said.

"We have taken no decision so far," Mr. Jalil told AIP.

Pakistan, which denies charges by the ousted government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani that it supports the mainly Pushtun Taliban, has been trying to avert fighting between the

Sunni Muslim militants now holding Kabul and forces loyal to Gen. Dostum to the north.

A spokesman for Mr. Rabbani's military chief, Ahmad Shah Masood, said on Sunday that Gen. Dostum's troops were poised to push down the so-called new road from Bagram airport, 60 kilometres north of Kabul, but witnesses said the frontline there did not appear to have changed significantly.

It was not clear if Mr. Babar would visit Mazar-e-Sharif again or return to Islamabad late Sunday, AIP said, adding there were no Dostum representatives at the meeting with Mr. Ghaus.

Earlier a spokesman for the Uzbek warlord said in Mazar-e-Sharif that Mr. Babar and Dostum discussed the continuing fighting north of Kabul.

Dostum's spokesman, General Mohammad Yousif, said the visit was the fifth in a week by Mr. Babar to Mazar-e-Sharif.

He also renewed his denial that Gen. Dostum's army was backing the forces of Mr. Masood in his continuing battle with the Taliban north of Kabul.

Mr. Masood's troops have pushed the Taliban back about 25 kilometres towards Kabul since they seized the strategic Bagram airport from the religious fighters two days ago.

Reuters correspondent Kurt Schork, travelling with Mr. Masood's largely ethnic Tajik troops, said elated fighters, shouting the battle-cry "God is greatest," seized

the village of Hussein Kot on Sunday, putting them just 20 kilometres from the city.

Witnesses said later they had pushed further south.

That left Mr. Masood with just an 13 kilometres stretch of the main road leading from the north across a lightly-populated, dusty plain to the entrance to the Kabul valley.

"God willing, we will be in Kabul today or tomorrow," Masood commander Gul Haider said in Hussein Kot, which the Taliban were peppering with mortar, artillery and rocket fire.

The witnesses said Taliban forces appeared to be withdrawing slowly and methodically, "they were worried but not panicking," said one.

But local villagers said a Taliban force had been trapped behind Mr. Masood's lines and was still resisting.

Masood spokesman Mirabuddin Astana told reporters Dostum forces were pushing down a parallel road to Kabul and were about 30 kilometres from the city.

Shortly after Mr. Masood took Hussein Kot, a barrage of rockets exploded around Kabul airport where the Taliban part of their air force.

At least seven rockets landed within the perimeter of the sprawling airport and aircraft, civilian and military, immediately took off. The detonations were a stark reminder of just how close another battle for the capital seems to be.



Taliban fighters in position against rival forces of the ousted government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani in a village outside Kabul (Reuters photo)

Israel could surprise the world over Palestinian state — Levy

CAIRO (AFP) — Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy on Sunday did not rule out the creation of a Palestinian state and said there were "real grounds for optimism" for a quick agreement on Hebron.

Mr. Levy made the remarks in an interview with the London-based Arab daily Al Hayat, conducted Wednesday and published on Sunday.

Asked if he expected the creation of an independent Palestinian state in the future, Mr. Levy said: "We have recognised the Palestinian (National) Authority (PNA) and we consider it our only partner in the negotiations."

"Do you want me to predict the outcome of the negotiations? Who knows."

Maybe we can surprise the world. The hope in the future is what everyone agrees upon," Mr. Levy said.

Rightwing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who won May elections in Israel, came to power on a platform publicly ruling out a future Palestinian state.

Turning to the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations aimed at finding a solution to the delayed Israeli redeployment from the West Bank town of Hebron, Mr. Levy said he expected an agreement in the near future.

"We have real grounds for optimism... Big progress has been made on several issues and we are now in a phase of putting the final touches (to an accord)," Mr. Levy said.

"We are waiting for the greenlight from (Palestinian President Yasser) Arafat to end the operation (negotiations) and I hope that Mr. Arafat will analyse the situation carefully," Mr. Levy said.

He stressed that "time is precious and we must make progress and revive mutual trust."

Mr. Levy also underscored the "importance and influence" of Syria but spoke of "a problem" with Damascus.

"It wants to define the results of the negotiations before they start and we cannot accept that," Mr. Levy said.

"We need to know Syrian intentions. We are working for peace and at the same time we see that the

Hizbollah is waging a real war against us and we know that this is not possible without Syria," he said.

Mr. Levy also acknowledged there were strains between Israel and the two Arab countries with which the Jewish state has peace accords — Jordan and Egypt — but played down the importance of these problems.

"We take very seriously Jordanian advice... the dialogue between us remains open and is positive," he said.

He expressed his "respect" for Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and said that when he meets his Egyptian counterpart Amr Musa "I feel as if we are schoolfriends."

U.S. evacuates more allies from north Iraq

DIYARBAKIR (AFP) — The United States Sunday completed a new operation to evacuate more than 700 Iraqi dissidents from northern Iraq into Turkey, local sources said.

About 730 people crossed the border gate of Habur and were taken to a camp in Silopi town Saturday and early Sunday, they said.

The group was expected to be flown to the Pacific island of Guam where the United States has a military base.

The operation involves mainly members of the Iraqi National Congress (INC), a coalition of groups opposed to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, which has received funding from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The dissidents fled their homes in the cities of Erbil and Sulaymaniyah in northern Iraq during a military campaign by Baghdad troops in September.

Turkish authorities, fearing infiltration by rebel Turkish Kurds from the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) carried out identity checks at the border before allowing the refugees to enter.

The evacuation is a repeat of an operation in mid-September when more than 2,000 refugees, mainly Kurds who had worked for U.S. agencies in northern Iraq, were flown to the

United States via Turkey after Baghdad-backed Kurds seized the Kurdish "capital" Erbil and Sulaymaniyah.

Both groups of refugees feared a purge by President Saddam who branded any Iraqis who worked for the United States as traitors and was reported to have resettled his own agents in Iraqi Kurdistan following the victory of the Baghdad-backed Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).

The INC was based in Erbil when the city was in the hands of the KDP's rivals, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), and was caught short by the KDP campaign on August 31.

According to the PUK, many INC members were rounded up and executed by Iraqi agents who moved into the city along with KDP fighters.

The latest evacuation came against an upsurge of fighting between the rival Iraqi Kurd factions.

The PUK, driven out of most of northern Iraq last month, launched a counter-offensive 10 days ago which has seen it recapture its former stronghold of Sulaymaniyah.

However, the KDP struck back again and since Friday it has recaptured part of the area it had recently lost to the PUK.

France seeks to reassure Turkey

PARIS (AFP) — French European Affairs Minister Michel Barnier goes to Ankara Monday to reassure the government that Europe wants close links with Turkey despite its criticisms.

The first direct contact between a French minister and the pro-Islamic government of Necmettin Erbakan comes amid renewed attacks on Turkey's human rights record by the European Parliament and problems in implementing a customs agreement.

Turkey has been trying to join the European Union (EU) since 1987, and in March last year signed a customs agreement after 20 years of negotiations and persistent objections by regional rival Greece.

But the result has been less than Ankara hoped, with EU firms profiting more than Turkish ones by the elimination of customs duties, and the European Parliament blocking an associated loan over the human rights question.

"This hold-up threatens to have a serious effect on the already weak Turkish economy," said Didier Billion, an expert on Turkish affairs at France's Institute for International and Strategic Relations.

Turkish Ambassador to France Tansug Bleda said that Turkey felt a sense of frustration with regard to the EU.

French officials said Mr. Barnier would try to counter this frustration in talks with Turkey's Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller.

"Turkey's European links remain a priority for France," said French foreign ministry spokesman Jacques Rummelhardt. "They are a guarantee of stability and prosperity for Turkey and the whole region."

Mr. Rummelhardt said France wanted the customs union to be successful and the whole of last year's agreement to be implemented, including the financial package.

Junblatt: Hariri impoverished 40% of Lebanon

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanon's billionaire Prime Minister Rafic Hariri has plunged 40 per cent of his people into poverty with his social and economic policies of the past four years, a government minister said Sunday.

Walid Junblatt, the leader of Lebanon's Druze community, told the Arab daily Asharq Al Awsat that Mr. Hariri "is only interested in the market econo-

my and does not see social priorities."

"Hariri represents one of these financial conglomerates that rule the world and recommend cuts in social benefits and privatisations in the name of market forces. That's why his reconstruction plan in Lebanon has no social dimension," said Mr. Junblatt, minister for displaced persons.

Since coming to power

in October 1992, Mr. Hariri has launched an \$18-billion reconstruction drive for the centre of war-shattered Beirut.

The cost of the 10-year plan, carried out by the private company Solidere in which Mr. Hariri is a major shareholder, has tripled Lebanon's total public debt and increased its external debt five-fold.

Mr. Junblatt's attack on Mr. Hariri comes as a sur-

prise after years of being considered one of the most loyal members of the premier's cabinet.

Mr. Hariri is acting as caretaker prime minister since parliament was dissolved last Tuesday, but is expected to be reappointed to the post because of his backing from Lebanon's powerful neighbour Syria and the international confidence he inspires.

New proof said to link Libya to Berlin blast

BERLIN (AFP) — German prosecutors have new evidence linking Libya to a deadly attack on a Berlin disco 10 years ago in which three people died and 200 were injured, the justice ministry said Sunday.

Ministry spokesman Rudiger Reiff, confirming a report in the news magazine Der Spiegel appearing Monday, said investigators had last month quizzed a Libyan implicated in the attack.

The 39-year-old man, who worked in the Libyan embassy in what was then East Germany, claimed Tripoli ordered the attack, Der Spiegel reported, while diplomats sent 12 kilograms of explosives to the embassy for the bomb.

Two U.S. military personnel and a Turkish woman were killed and over 230 were wounded in the April 4, 1986 bombing of La Belle discotheque, in what was then West Berlin, which was frequented by U.S. servicemen.

Mr. Reiff, again confirming the Spiegel article, said German intelligence gave investigators documents passed between Tripoli and its East German embassy.

"Wait for the result tomorrow morning, according to the will of Allah," one message said shortly before the attack, Der Spiegel said.

It also cited the last telex sent by the embassy: "The action occurred at 1:30 a.m. without leaving any traces" (of involvement).

The messages were intercepted after the attack and sparked a retaliatory U.S. bombing raid on Tripoli 10 days later.

Palestinian Ali Shanaa and his former wife Verena, both 37, were arrested on Oct. 10 on suspicion of murder and bombing. Verena's sister Andrea was arrested a few days later in Greece.

After their arrest, Der Spiegel reported that Ali Shanaa had given details of preparations for the attack and the involvement of Libyan intelligence to the East German secret police.

Hamas plans 'response' to Abu Marzouk extradition

CAIRO (AP) — The militant movement Hamas is discussing how to respond to a possible extradition of its leader who is jailed in the United States to Israel, an Arabic daily reported Sunday.

A federal judge ruled early this month that Musa Abu Marzouk, the political leader of Hamas, should be handed over to Israel for trial.

The London-based Al Hayat said the group's military wing, known as the Izzedine Al Qassam Brigade, has been pushing its political leadership for authorisation to carry out "a practical response" if Mr. Abu Marzouk is extradited.

Quoting Palestinian sources in Tehran, the paper said the military wing's request insisted that Washington "should be punished through a practical formula" if Mr. Abu Marzouk is sent for trial in Israel.

Neither the paper nor the sources said what action the Hamas military brigade was contemplating, but its statement appeared to be a reference to attacks against American interests.

Mr. Abu Marzouk, 45, a businessman who has lived

in the United States for 15 years, was arrested July 25 at Kennedy International Airport when U.S. immigration and naturalisation service inspectors realised his name had recently been added to a list of suspected terrorists.

Later he was accused of tunnelling up to \$500,000 to the militant Palestinian group after he went to Gaza to reorganise Hamas in 1989.

Israel asked for his extradition, saying he had been accused of conspiring to commit murder, man slaughter and other crimes.

Mr. Abu Marzouk has denied he had any control over terrorist actions. He said Hamas is a mass movement composed of numerous separate cells that could not be controlled by a single leader.

Al Hayat said the Hamas movement's highest body, the Shura Council, would meet soon to make a decision on the military wing's request and to "reevaluate the group's strategy."

Mr. Abu Marzouk refused to appeal the sentence, but the paper said the Hamas leadership has asked him to do so while it studies other options.

Column 8 Edition

Diana dropped from parliamentary prayers

LONDON (R) — Princess Diana has been quietly removed from the prayers said for the royal family in the British parliament before each day's business, a Sunday newspaper reported. The move, described as "vindicative" by one member of parliament, follows her divorce from Prince Charles, the heir to the throne, on Aug. 28. The Mail on Sunday said Queen Elizabeth approved the downgrading of Princess Diana's status after talks with constitutional experts. Until last week, the parliamentary prayer asked for God's blessing and happiness for both the prince and princess. The text, reverting to the wording used before their marriage, now refers only to "Charles, Prince of Wales."

Lord Haw Haw's daughter defends her father

LONDON (R) — The daughter of William Joyce, known as Lord Haw Haw, has spoken for the first time in defence of the man who taunted Britain with Nazi propaganda broadcasts during World War II, a Sunday newspaper said. Fifty years after Joyce was hanged for treason, Heather Lancelotti, 64, told the Sunday Telegraph: "I can never think of my father as a traitor. I do not think he deserved to die." She added: "My father never killed anyone. He only made speeches. He was wicked, I suppose, but he was not as evil as some." Joyce made broadcasts on behalf of Josef Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda chief, which were intended to demoralise the British people. But he became a butt of jokes and was nicknamed Lord Haw Haw because of his plummy English tones.

Italian group sails into record book

TRIESTE, Italy (R) — The largest cruise ship in the world, taller than the Statue of Liberty, has been delivered after completion by shipbuilder Fincantieri, the Italian group said. The company said it had handed the 100,000-plus gross tonne ship over to U.S. Carnival Corp., the world's largest cruise line, at its Monfalcone Shipyard in northeastern Italy. "The Carnival Destiny is the world's largest passenger ship of all time," said a statement from Fincantieri. No price was given for the 270-metre (885 ft) vessel which was completed in 20 months and is big enough for 3,400 passengers and 1,000 crew with 16 decks and 1,320 cabins.

Australians urged to eat cats' tails

SYDNEY (AFP) — An impassioned debate over the fate of Australia's feral cat population was inflamed Sunday when a prominent cat-hater and environmentalist recommended "pussy tail stew" as an eradication method. John Wamsley, the managing director of native wildlife sanctuary company Earth Sanctuaries, said people should trap and eat feral cats to help reduce the growing number of the animals in the outback. His comments came after Deputy Richard Evans recommended to parliament Thursday that Australia should eradicate its 18 million feral and domestic cats by 2020, to prevent them killing an estimated three million birds and animals every year. Pet lovers and animal welfare organisations have united against Mr. Evans, who said domestic cats were only one step away from contributing to the decimation of native fauna. Mr. Wamsley said native mammals had become extinct in the past 200 years and more than 100 species were vulnerable or endangered with extinction.